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New York

President:	Mr. Syed Hamid Albar	(Malaysia)
Members:	Argentina	Mr. Petrella
	Bahrain	Mr. Buallay
	Brazil	Mr. Moura
	Canada	Mr. Duval
	China	Mr. Shen Guofang
	France	Mr. Dejammet
	Gabon	Mr. Dangue Réwaka
	Gambia	Mr. Jagne
	Namibia	Mr. Andjaba
	Netherlands	Mr. van Walsum
	Russian Federation	Mr. Lavrov
	Slovenia	Mr. Türk
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Jeremy Greenstock
	United States of America	Mr. Burleigh

Agenda

Maintenance of peace and security and post-conflict peace-building

Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants in a peacekeeping environment

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The meeting was called to order at 11.10 a.m.

Expression of thanks to the retiring President

The President: As this is the first meeting of the Security Council for the month of July, I should like to take this opportunity to pay tribute, on behalf of the Council, to His Excellency Mr. Baboucarr-Blaise Ismaila Jagne, Permanent Representative of the Gambia to the United Nations, for his service as President of the Security Council for the month of June 1999. I am sure I speak for all members of the Security Council in expressing deep appreciation to Ambassador Jagne for the great diplomatic skill with which he conducted the Council's business last month.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Maintenance of peace and security and post-conflict peace-building

Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants in a peacekeeping environment

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Australia, Bangladesh, Croatia, El Salvador, Finland, Guatemala, Indonesia, Japan, Mozambique, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea and South Africa, in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Smith (Australia), Mr. Chowdhury (Bangladesh), Mr. Simonović (Croatia), Mr. Meléndez-Barahona (El Salvador), Ms. Korpi (Finland), Mr. Rosenthal (Guatemala), Mr. Wibisono (Indonesia), Mr. Yamazaki (Japan), Mr. Santos (Mozambique), Mr. Hughes (New Zealand), Mr. Lee (Republic of Korea) and Mr. Vermeulen (South Africa) took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Today, the Security Council will hold an open debate on the question pertaining to disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants in a peacekeeping environment, in the context of the maintenance of peace and security and post-conflict peace-building.

I give the floor to the Deputy Secretary-General.

The Deputy Secretary-General: I am pleased to be here today to share some thoughts on the role that disarmament, demobilization and reintegration play in United Nations peacekeeping.

The conflicts with which the Security Council is grappling today have given these tasks particular urgency. Those conflicts are more often than not internal civil wars, with some degree of cross-border or international implications. They tend to take place in poorer countries, with vast movements of internally displaced persons as well as refugees.

Easily available light arms, including landmines, are the weapons of choice. And often, one finds among the combatants young children conscripted as soldiers. These are, in short, highly complex and volatile situations. For us, as outsiders, the task of helping the afflicted countries find the path of peace and development presents an enormous challenge.

Within that challenge, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration are distinct tasks, but ones which often overlap, and which must in any case be approached as part of an integrated peace-building process.

These are also highly sensitive tasks. They involve fundamental questions about the extent of State authority, about the course of economic development, and about societal cohesion. Moreover, in most instances, success is based both on the will of the parties to surrender their weapons and on the unstinting support of the international community — a difficult combination to find.

The United Nations has been mandated to undertake disarmament in peacekeeping operations in Africa, South-East Asia, Central America, and the Balkans. Each is a different experience, reflecting a particular country's

circumstances, the terms of the peace agreement and the mandate approved by the Security Council. But some general definitions apply.

Strictly speaking, disarmament is the assembly and cantonment of combatants and the voluntary handing over of their weapons to peacekeeping troops, who then ensure the safe storage of the weapons and their final disposition. In most cases, the responsibility for the assembly of combatants lies with the party to be disarmed, as provided for in a peace agreement.

Technically, demining is a separate task in its own right. But that, too, is an essential feature of most peacekeeping and post-conflict peace-building operations, and is much easier when the active cooperation of the parties to the conflict can be secured.

As a rule, the disarmament of civilians is not the responsibility of a peacekeeping mission, but rather a task incumbent upon national authorities, sometimes with assistance provided by the international community. However, by supporting efforts to strengthen national law-enforcement capacity, a peacekeeping operation can play a key role in creating an environment in which the general populace does not deem weapons to be necessary.

Buy-back programmes have been considered a useful means of accelerating disarmament and advancing the peace process in post-conflict periods and in regions marred by insecurity. When timed properly, they can be very beneficial. However, experience has shown that, if timed wrongly, weapons exchanges which involve direct financial payments to individuals may actually be destabilizing.

For example, civilian buy-back programmes may inhibit military disarmament, in which combatants are instructed by their leaders to hand over their weapons but are not paid to do so. Furthermore, the establishment of a high price for weapons to promote disarmament could create an artificial market for weapons, and spark an overwhelming movement of weapons into the country and surrounding region.

So a cautious approach is highly desirable, even when non-monetary incentives are used. The final decision should take into account the overall context of proliferation and the potential effects at the local, national and regional levels. Weapons-collection programmes may need to be linked with incentives such as provision of jobs or training, which are not easily converted into cash, and related to development initiatives that benefit entire communities.

Experience has also shown that if ex-combatants do not have the means of sustaining themselves as civilians, they can be tempted into carrying arms and committing acts of banditry, thereby destabilizing the peace process. Therefore, disarmament needs to be complemented by comprehensive demobilization and reintegration programmes.

The process of demobilization involves registration, medical examinations, assistance to combatants to meet their immediate basic needs and transportation to their home communities or, sometimes, absorption into a unified military force.

Finally, reintegration denotes a variety of steps to help ex-combatants adapt successfully to a productive civilian life. This assistance has to be given to returning refugees and internally displaced persons as well as to demobilized combatants and their families. It includes employment and micro-credit programmes, vocational training and education.

Clearly, reintegration is a long-term social and economic process which needs to continue even after a peacekeeping operation has completed its mandate.

This will no doubt be a wide-ranging debate. What should not be questioned is that the international community can offer significant support to disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes. Allow me to suggest that success will be determined to no small extent by how well we bear in mind the following considerations.

First, terms for the disposal of arms and ammunition should be included within peace agreements when they are first negotiated, so that the issue does not become an obstacle to peace at a later stage.

Secondly, predictable financing is critical. Starting a programme without the funding to complete it may raise expectations on the part of ex-combatants that cannot be fulfilled. This, in and of itself, can prove to be highly destabilizing. Voluntary financing of demobilization projects can also be a problem, as any delays in receiving contributions can place the entire process in jeopardy. Member States are encouraged to contribute to the United Nations Development Programme Trust Fund that has been established to deal

with small arms, and which includes a weapons collection and destruction component. International institutions such as the World Bank can also provide valuable technical and financial support, but there must be close coordination between the Bank and the peacekeeping operation involved.

Thirdly, the special needs of child soldiers, including girl soldiers, should, where appropriate, be seen as a crucial element in a peacekeeping operation's mandate. It has been estimated that more than 300,000 children under 18 years of age were used as soldiers in conflicts around the world between 1995 and 1997. Some United Nations peacekeeping operations have included a special focus on the demobilization of child soldiers. United Nations bodies such as the United Nations Children's Fund, and non-governmental organizations, provide special programmes for them, including counselling, education and family reunification.

But much more needs to be done. The problem will not be solved until the international community adopts a concerted approach, which must address the causes as well as the consequences of child recruitment, that is, the social, economic and political factors which make children susceptible to it. The Security Council should in future make the needs of child soldiers a central concern when it considers specific crises, when it mandates peacekeeping or peacemaking missions and when it designs peace-building programmes. It is also worth remembering that demobilizing child soldiers and children who are pressed into the war effort in other roles can be an opportunity as well as a problem. It can be the first thing the parties to a conflict are able to agree on, and so become the starting point for a dialogue which later leads to a ceasefire and a broader agreement.

Fourthly, the deployment of a follow-on political mission after the termination or withdrawal of a peacekeeping operation can be a useful means to avoid setbacks and relapses into insecurity. The inclusion within such missions of expertise in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration might not be an obvious step, but it would certainly prove beneficial.

Finally, a rigorous media and publicity campaign to educate and mobilize popular support for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration efforts must be built into the operation from the start.

The process of post-conflict disarmament, demobilization and reintegration is rooted in and feeds into a broader search for peace. The international community, working through the United Nations, has a real contribution to make. I look forward to hearing the Council's views.

The President: I thank the Deputy Secretary-General for her statement.

Mr. Buallay (Bahrain) (*spoke in Arabic*): I should like to express my delegation's satisfaction at seeing you, Sir, presiding over our meeting, and to thank the Malaysian delegation for taking the initiative, during its presidency of the Security Council this month, of choosing the very important issue of the disarmament and reintegration into society of ex-combatants.

There is no doubt that this initiative indicates the importance that you attach to this issue, Mr. President, and the importance of the role of the United Nations in addressing it with a view to maintaining international peace and security.

The international community suffers as a result of the persistence of conflicts, which have led to destabilization and insecurity in many parts of the world. The major reason for the continuation of such conflicts is illicit flows of arms, in particular light weapons, and their distribution and storage. This is a matter that threatens national, regional and international security; the lack of stability has an impact on development in those regions.

Some stable parts of the world have begun to achieve significant economic and political progress in the past few years. But in other parts of the world, such progress remains threatened by conflicts. Halting such conflicts and their recurrence remains one of the major concerns of the United Nations.

There is no doubt that States have a sovereign right to self-defence, which requires procurement of defence equipment and *materiél*. However, the interests of humanity require that minimal of resources be allocated to military purposes. It is therefore important that countries work to reduce military expenditure and focus on economic, social and human development.

We have noticed an increase in illegal weapons flows in recent years. Halting that increase will require us to determine the sources of such weapons flows. That is a very important element in any effort to monitor that trade. Weapons exporters are responsible, albeit indirectly, for the exacerbation of conflicts, and particular

importance must be attached to the role of arms merchants in exporting such weapons to conflict areas. In this respect, we should consider the role of the sanctions committees of the Security Council in studying these issues so that we can deal with the problem effectively. The Security Council should confront this issue as a matter of urgency, including by examining the role that the United Nations could play in collecting and disseminating relevant information. We also welcome the contribution of the Secretary-General with regard to concentrating on the problem of the illegal trade in small arms and light weapons, especially in Africa.

Peacekeeping missions have played a very important role in the attempt to stop conflicts from being renewed, and they have a very important role in building post-conflict peace and security. This is a new and logical task that has been given to them. The maintenance and consolidation of peace after the end of a conflict requires enormous effort. It has therefore become very important for the international community to support such efforts for the purpose of strengthening economic, social and security structures in these regions. Therefore, we support the role of the United Nations in bringing about and consolidating peace in post-conflict situations. In this context, we must coordinate the response to international conflicts with the wishes of the party concerned, because without the political will of that party it is impossible to achieve progress in the peace process. The existence of a real commitment on the part of the parties to the conflict is one of the preconditions for the success of the peace process. In this context, we support the intention of the United Nations to establish peacekeeping forces in Haiti and in Guinea-Bissau. We hope that this experiment will be expanded should it prove successful.

The experience of the United Nations and other international organizations over the last few years confirms the content of "An Agenda for Peace", which was issued by the Secretary-General in 1992. In that document the Secretary-General observed that the multiplicity of tasks required genuine cooperation among international agencies and organizations, and at the regional level. It also requires the active participation of United Nations Member States.

We now turn to major specific issues of today's debate: the disarmament of ex-combatants and their reintegration into society. This involves two separate but complementary processes: first, the disarmament of ex-combatants, and secondly, their reintegration into society. It is important to explain the advantages of disarming ex-combatants before becoming engaged in their reintegration. If they are not first disarmed, the conflict will inevitably resume as before. This problem has been observed in many hot spots where crucial institutions and structures were not given the necessary support to resume their natural tasks in the country of conflict, without which, conflict inevitably returns.

The media have provided many examples of naked, barefoot children and young people carrying modern, sophisticated weapons. In such cases how can we end conflicts? It is no surprise that in such situations conflicts have continued for more than 20 years. And there is nothing on the horizon that suggests that these conflicts will end any time soon.

The disarmament of combatants is a very important matter, and despite the fact that today's debate deals with ex-combatants, we need to be aware that in fact they will not become ex-combatants unless we insist on their disarming and on disarmament in general. Otherwise, conflicts will continue interminably, and ongoing conflict will become a fait accompli, as has happened in some countries, which after many years have become known as conflict zones.

If we are able to disarm combatants and make them into ex-combatants, we can deal with the second part of the problem: the reintegration of these people into society. We believe that the reintegration of ex-combatants is more difficult than disarmament. It is true that disarmament is dangerous, in that combatants may refuse to surrender their weapons. Anyone who undertakes this disarmament work is endangered by those who do not wish to surrender their weapons.

The reintegration process involves a number of factors, the most important of which is the willingness of the combatants to surrender their weapons, having grown used to conflict and to the many forms of aggression, pillaging and violence that accompany fighting.

If achieving disarmament assumes that all difficulties can be overcome, the reintegration process assumes an economic situation that facilitates this process, to include the creation of appropriate jobs and the necessary social and economic services. Let us be practical and ask ourselves how many of the developing countries that are in a state of peace have the capacity to provide for the economic and social needs of their citizens. What then can be expected from the economic and social situations of countries in conflict? It is not news that refugee camps, full of victims of conflict, have become centres for the distribution of weapons, or that refugees,

voluntarily or otherwise, are participating in conflicts. Although the disarmament and demobilization of ex-combatants precede the reintegration process, the latter is more complex, owing to the enormous requirements and the difficulty of fulfilling them.

Only rarely, has the United Nations, for all its efforts, succeeded in these tasks of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration although it has succeeded in a number of cases. We must be aware that this does not lie within the capacity of the Organization. Despite the Charter's responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, the Organization is unable to deal with the massive power of the arms trade to exacerbate existing conflicts and incite new ones. This is particularly true in the current climate of globalization, which has its good and evil aspects, and given the ease of communications it has provided.

Today's open debate in the Security Council is part of an international effort to contribute to the study of this issue. We hope that the views and opinions presented here will lead to the active resolution of these problems. In conclusion, I would like to stress my delegation's support for the presidential statement proposed by the Malaysian delegation for issuance at the end of this debate.

Sir Jeremy Greenstock (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom warmly welcomes Malaysia's initiative to hold an open debate on the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants in peacekeeping environments. Effective disarmament, demobilization and reintegration is crucial in building lasting peace and security in post-conflict societies.

We are also grateful to the Department of Peacekeeping Operations for their non-paper, which provides a sound basis for today's discussion. We welcome the Department's plans for a manual setting out principles and guidelines for practical disarmament, demobilization and reintegration in a peacekeeping environment, and look forward to its publication.

Today's debate will only be of value if it has a practical effect on the way in which the Council addresses conflict situations in the future. The recommendations provided by the Secretary-General in his reports to the Security Council are clearly crucial in this respect. The Secretariat is right to flag disarmament, demobilization and reintegration requirements in peacekeeping operations. This must continue, in particular when making recommendations on a new or developing operation.

For their part, the Security Council and the General Assembly must ensure that a United Nations peacekeeping operation has an appropriate mandate and sufficient budgetary and human resources for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration tasks assigned to it. If an operation is to carry out disarmament or provide security at disarmament sites, its mandate must provide the appropriate authorization and the right force level, based on clear and practical advice from the Secretary-General. Half-measures do little to contribute to lasting peace. The possible peacekeeping operation in Sierra Leone will provide an early opportunity for the Council to translate today's debate into concrete action. How valuable it would be if we could, with that kind of experience in the field, thrash out a blueprint for action on future occasions, which would give us confidence that these things can work.

In that spirit, I would like to touch on some elements that seem to the United Kingdom to be important in constructing an effective disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme and many of these elements reflect the priorities spelled out to us just now by the Deputy Secretary-General.

First, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration must be given a higher priority in peace agreements and be subject to careful planning. Where possible, a disarmament, demobilization and reintegration plan should be written into a peace agreement with its provisions set out clearly. It is important that all parties understand what is on offer, including through public information campaigns.

Secondly, effective international coordination is essential. The United Nations funds and programmes, the Bretton Woods institutions and multilateral and bilateral donors all have a role to play, but their efforts must be concerted. As a rule, the United Nations should provide the coordinating framework.

Thirdly, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes must be well resourced to be effective and tailored to the specific circumstances of different societies, including existing norms of weapons possession.

Fourthly, we must address the specific problem of child soldiers. Child soldiers are often the last to disarm and the first to rearm. Often as much victim as perpetrator, the child soldier requires special attention

and treatment. The emphasis must be on long-term reintegration.

Fifthly, the security of collected weapons is important if they are to be placed under the control of legitimate military authorities. Otherwise, they must be destroyed as soon as possible. Those who surrender weapons must also be given a strong and credible guarantee of their security.

The need for security is also tied into the need for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration to be set in the context of wider security sector reform, including the restructuring of armed forces and assistance to the civilian police force and judiciary. Unless the State itself can provide security to its citizens, there will be no incentive for disarmament. This is why the United Kingdom has focused a significant proportion of its aid to Sierra Leone on contributing to the radical restructuring and training of the Sierra Leone armed forces.

The third and equally important element of today's debate is reintegration. The United Nations has a lot of experience, both good and bad. In Mozambique, for instance, a long-term reintegration programme worked. My delegation looks forward to hearing from the representative of Mozambique in this debate about his country's experience in this regard. In Angola, the programme did not work. The fact that it did not work contributed to a much longer and costlier conflict in that country. In effect, reintegration meant returning to UNITA's ranks. We have to find a way to ensure that former soldiers have a stake in building the peace and that their future is assured.

My sixth point is that disarmament, demobilization and reintegration cannot be effective if new weapons are flowing into the target area. We must therefore ensure that arms exporting countries exercise responsibility in their small-arms transfers and we must combat the illicit trafficking of such weapons.

But disarmament need not always take place in the context of a peace agreement and the deployment of a peacekeeping operation. The initiatives taken up, for instance, by the Governments of Albania and Mali, with the support of the United Nations Development Programme and the European Union, provide commendable examples of attempts to deal with surplus weapons in civilian possession. This "security first" approach should be applauded. For example, the demobilization of child soldiers in long-running civil wars may be possible even before a peace agreement is concluded.

The United Kingdom is particularly pleased that you, Sir, are chairing our meeting on this subject today. Your presence is a clear signal of the importance which Malaysia attaches to this subject. We look forward to working closely with you, with your delegation and with other Council members on this issue in the future and we are glad to support the draft declaration which Malaysia has proposed to conclude this debate.

The President: I thank the representative of the United Kingdom for his kinds words about Malaysia.

Mr. Lavrov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Mr. President, it is a great pleasure for us to see you, the Foreign Minister of Malaysia, as President of the Security Council as we take up this important item on the initiative of your country.

Today's discussion in the Security Council confirms the relevance of the question of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants as an essential, integral part of peacekeeping operations and post-conflict peace-building. The Russian Federation shares the view that, in many cases, the disarmament of ex-combatants and the collection and the destruction of their weapons are important conditions for normalizing regional crisis situations. We agree that the issue before us today requires a comprehensive approach and the coordination of efforts by the international community. Otherwise, it will not be possible to establish firm guarantees that conflicts will not be resumed.

The Security Council is always aware of the issue of demobilization of regions in crisis, including, when appropriate within peacekeeping operation mandates, provisions on assistance in the process of disarming, demobilizing and reintegrating ex-combatants. At the same time, however, such good decisions are frequently confined to the paper on which they are written and never actually implemented. One does not have to look far for examples. Suffice it to recall some issues regularly considered by the Security Council. One particularly obvious example of the grave consequences of failed efforts to disarm combatants is the collapse of the peace process in Angola. As is well known, and as was just pointed out by Ambassador Greenstock, the main reason for the situation is the failure of the Angolan opposition UNITA to implement its commitments under the peace agreements, primarily as they relate to the demobilization of all its forces. The Security Council could usefully draw the appropriate lesson from the Angola situation by stepping up its search for ways

effectively to ensure the full implementation of its resolutions.

The issues before us today arise acutely and directly within the context of a settlement of the Kosovo situation. Security Council resolution 1244 (1999) clearly provides for the demobilization of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) and other armed groups of Kosovar Albanians. This task was given by the Security Council to the international force for Kosovo, KFOR. It calls for the genuine disarmament of the KLA fighters and the full dismantling of all the military structures of that organization, which may not be re-established in any form whatsoever. As a first step, it also calls for the halt to all acts of violence by the KLA. Unless this task is performed as quickly and effectively as possible, it will be impossible to stabilize the situation in and around Kosovo, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, or to ensure a strong and lasting settlement of the Kosovo crisis.

Unfortunately, the process of demobilizing the KLA is not progressing fast enough, and KFOR contingents from the North Atlantic Treaty Organization member countries are clearly not moving ahead on this very important issue. As an active participant in the Kosovo settlement and in KFOR, Russia expects a qualitative breakthrough in the demobilizing of the KLA to be achieved very soon. We will be continuing to take the necessary steps in this area, *inter alia*, in the framework of the Security Council.

One further example is Tajikistan. Against the background of the peace process unfolding in that country, particularly egregious is the delayed implementation of the Protocol on military issues of the General Agreement on the Establishment of Peace and National Accord in Tajikistan, which provides for disarming and dismantling the military units of the opposition. The main responsibility for this, of course, lies with the United Tajik Opposition (UTO). However, the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan could have played a more active role. It is clearly mandated to monitor the cantonment of UTO fighters, the collection of weapons, demobilization and reintegration and to provide assistance to the parties in this area. Moreover, the demobilization and reintegration into civilian life of the opposition fighters and the inter-Tajik peace process as a whole require adequate financial and material support from the international community, which, unfortunately, has been quite inadequate to date. We trust that the appeal made in Security Council resolution 1240 (1999) for contributions, including the implementation of proposals for demobilization, and the relevant appeals of the Secretary-General eventually will be heeded by the international community. Otherwise, the peace process in Tajikistan may give rise to serious difficulties.

The task of disarming and demobilizing participants in armed conflict is indissolubly linked to the problem of the uncontrolled proliferation of small arms and light weapons, particularly in regions of crisis. My colleagues this morning have also referred to this issue. Russia is interested in stepping up efforts to combat the illicit use of conventional weapons, particularly in conflict areas. We support United Nations involvement in efforts to collect and destroy small arms and light weapons when its assistance has been requested and the States involved have given their consent.

We must also work to enhance the effectiveness of arms embargo regimes imposed by the Security Council. As we have often stressed, arms embargoes with loopholes merely exacerbate military confrontation between conflicting parties and undermine the authority of the Security Council and of the United Nations as a whole. In this sense, it is necessary to draw serious lessons from the negative experience of the Kosovo crisis, where external support for the KLA was provided virtually in the open, in flagrant violation of the decisions of the Security Council.

In conclusion, I wish to confirm once again that the Russian Federation, fully aware of its responsibilities as a permanent member of the Security Council, will continue to make an active and practical contribution to United Nations peacekeeping in all its aspects, including the issues before us today. I do not believe that there are any differences of opinion about how to resolve this problem. The statement prepared by Malaysia enjoys broad consensus support in the Security Council and the United Nations as a whole. It is therefore our view that the task now is not so much how to systemize principles and approaches, but to implement these principles in practice without allowing violations of Security Council resolutions or having to cite such examples as I cited earlier.

The President: I thank the representative of the Russian Federation for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. Türk (Slovenia): I wish to begin by expressing the gratitude of my delegation to you, Sir, for assuming the presidency of the Security Council today and to the delegation of Malaysia for the initiative to consider issues of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration in an open debate of the Security Council.

The topic of our discussion today relates to some of the most sensitive and difficult aspects of the work of the Security Council and of the United Nations system as a whole. The present period of history is characterized by a large diversity of military conflicts, many of which take place within States, albeit with varying degrees of involvement by other States. Ending such military conflicts represents a major challenge in the maintenance of international peace and security today. The demobilization, disarmament and reintegration of combatants belonging to a variety of armed formations and groups are among the essential conditions for the transition from a state of war to a situation of peace. It is timely for the Security Council to take up these issues and to address them in a comprehensive and thematic manner. Furthermore, it is useful to hear the views of all interested Member States and from the Deputy Secretary- General, whose presence today we particularly appreciate. Given the fact that the conceptual discussion in which we are engaged today is new in some respects, it would be useful to envisage the areas in which further work, including further study, is necessary.

Experience has shown that progress towards disarmament and demobilization has been quicker and more far-reaching in situations where a comprehensive peace agreement has been concluded. On the other hand, experience has also shown that peace agreements sometimes leave much to be desired. Consequently, the implementation becomes more complex and difficult. Making peace usually implies difficult choices, a fact of which the United Nations is intensely aware today, at the conclusion of the peace agreement in Sierra Leone. However, we should keep in mind the wisdom of the great European philosopher Erasmus, who explained in 1508 that "the most disadvantageous peace is better than the most just war". This maxim is relevant to many contemporary conflicts and has a specific meaning: peace is a challenge. It can be disadvantageous from the standpoint of the basic values of humanity, but the real struggle for those values is given a chance when the war is ended.

Since comprehensive peace agreements are not always possible, post-conflict activities often begin on the basis of an imperfect peace or of a mere ceasefire agreement. Even in those situations, the activities of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, especially those related to the fate of child soldiers, should be pursued.

In the right conditions, the United Nations has been able to accomplish successfully several large-scale projects of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. The success in Mozambique in 1993 and 1994 — at a time that has been described as an otherwise difficult year for the United Nations — is most often cited as a United Nations success. The total number of government and RENAMO soldiers demobilized was over 70,000. The work was done within the reintegration support scheme, which was largely implemented by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The scheme included cash payments, vocational training, the promotion of small-scale economic activities and credit facilities for the demobilized soldiers and was essential for the successful reintegration of ex-combatants into civilian life. This example demonstrates the importance of the involvement of UNDP and, more generally, the need to establish a link between the process of demobilization and post-conflict development. All the relevant parts of the United Nations system must come into the picture. Mozambique is a classic example of both the success and the inherent importance of disarmament in post-conflict situations.

The disarmament of combatants is also important as an indicator of progress towards political normalization. The continued existence of parallel or competing armed forces or of widespread banditry is a formidable obstacle to political normalization and should be overcome.

A set of tasks closely related to disarmament issues are defined with the words "mine action". Although mine action has a separate identity, it needs to be mentioned today in view of its overall importance for post-conflict normalization. Mine action is more than only demining; it also includes assistance to mine victims and the creation of mine awareness in the public at large.

The implementation of provisions of international instruments regarding demining and the destruction of landmines must be among the highest priorities after a conflict. This is necessary not only to prevent the recurrence of a given conflict, but also to minimize the amount of land restricted by mine infestation and to expedite the return of refugees, internally displaced persons and demobilized soldiers to their zones and their livelihoods. Rehabilitation of mine victims is an important condition of normalization after a conflict and, perhaps most important, the way to restore both the productivity and the human dignity of those most severely affected. Mine awareness needs to be created and supported as a part of the effort to mobilize the population for post-conflict activities. Peace cannot be sustained and development cannot thrive in an atmosphere where an

explosion could wound anyone at any time. Successful mine action strengthens both peace and development.

For all these reasons, mine action must be considered as early as possible in the peace settlement process. Short-term priorities should be carefully designed to reinforce the process of long-term mine action. These lessons have been learned and re-learned in many conflicts around the globe, and are important in post-conflict situations today, including that of Kosovo.

Demobilization and disarmament are essential, but they are not ends in themselves. The objective is the restoration of normality and the reintegration of all segments of society. All combatants should be reintegrated, except persons responsible for war crimes and crimes against humanity. Peace with impunity is unstable peace. It may not always be possible to prosecute the perpetrators immediately after a conflict. However, let me recall that in cases of war crimes and crimes against humanity, statutory limitations do not apply, and bringing the perpetrators to justice remains an essential if sometimes long-term task for guaranteeing the durability of peace.

A particular priority in the process of reintegration must be given to children, in particular to child soldiers. Many contemporary armed conflicts take place over a protracted period of time. The consequences are devastating for children. In addition to the immediate effects of violence, such conflicts deprive entire generations of the benefits of security, health care and, above all, education. Entire generations are being victimized and their prospects for normal life destroyed.

The Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict has done much useful work to help us understand the extent and importance of this problem. The Deputy Secretary-General also spoke extensively about this problem today. The Special Representative has done some country-specific preparatory work, including in Sierra Leone. With the advent of peace in that war-torn country, the task of reintegration of child soldiers and other affected children will be among the basic priorities. We hope that in a future debate focused on the problems of children in armed conflict the Council will thoroughly consider the fate of children in Sierra Leone and in other post-conflict situations.

In its discussion today the Security Council must be aware of the general need to curb illicit arms trafficking, including the spread of small arms. The Council must be grateful to the Disarmament Commission for the adoption of guidelines on conventional arms control/limitation and disarmament with particular emphasis on consolidation of peace. The regional efforts pursued by the Organization of American States, the European Union and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) merit the Security Council's support. We particularly welcome the efforts in Africa, a region most tragically exposed to arms trafficking. The decision of the OAU to strengthen the Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Togo and to intensify work on practical measures of disarmament are among the important developments in this domain.

This Security Council debate and the follow-up activities should give due attention to wider disarmament and arms limitation as a factor for the maintenance of international peace and security.

Let me conclude by saying that we support the draft presidential statement that was prepared for the conclusion of today's discussion, including the follow-up envisaged in that statement.

Mr. Petrella (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): I convey my thanks to the Deputy Secretary-General, Ms. Louise Fréchette, for her presence here today and for her important statement.

As affirmed in the Security Council two years ago, it is a tragic fact of our day that in many places where it is impossible to find food, education or health care, it is easy to find machine guns, grenades and anti-personnel mines. If this trend continues, any hope for development, peace and growth will disappear in many countries.

We therefore congratulate you, Mr. Minister, and the other members of your delegation on having provided us with an opportunity to discuss the subject of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants as a critical element in building lasting peace.

Conflicts within States have their roots in weak Governments, in a history of social and ethnic strife, economic uncertainty, corruption, a lack of security and abuse of minorities, all combined with poverty and hopelessness. Such conflicts can result from one of these causes or from a combination of several, but they all require one additional element: access to substantial quantities of small arms and light weapons. With that added factor, war has become a way of life for combatants. It does not matter whether they are on the side of the insurgents or of the Government; wars of this kind recognize no ideology. It is even graver that for

many people, especially teenagers, joining militias is the only possible occupation. All of this has an impact at the national and the regional levels, affecting peace and security and thus requiring the attention of the Security Council.

Consideration of this subject requires reexamination of the concept of security and the creative development of new ways to make it a reality. It is worth asking what we are talking about when we refer in the Charter to the need to maintain international peace and security. In the present context, there is no doubt that what we seek to maintain is the security of the human being. It is also worth asking what we are talking about when we refer in the Charter to the need to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, and for the suppression of acts of aggression. In our view, this refers to conflict prevention and peace-building.

Human security and peace-building are thus key complementary concepts. Prerequisites for achieving human security are the strengthening of democratic institutions, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, good governance and sustainable development.

In turn, the latter requires that States be able to reconstruct their economies by gaining access to capital markets and reasonable outlets for their exports. Peace-building is an effort to improve conditions from within, strengthening society's internal capacity to resolve its conflicts without violence.

In this context, the proliferation of small arms constitutes a threat to human security in general and to those societies that seek to rehabilitate themselves. This does not mean that arms flows must be unconditionally ended, since the right to self-defence is recognized by the Charter. The idea is to help prevent and control armed conflicts. In this context, it is also necessary to support local efforts to rebuild social cohesion and to restore public security and the legitimacy of the State as the provider of security.

It is essential to restore the confidence and well-being of the societies affected. Your initiative, Sir, to achieve disarmament, demobilization and the reintegration of ex-combatants is a good step in that direction.

The task does not end there, however. Post-conflict peace-building can benefit from cooperation projects in which one or more countries participate to create conditions conducive to good governance, economic reform and export. To that end, regional organizations can prove useful, complementing the efforts made at the national level.

The experience of Latin America and the Caribbean has been exemplary in all of these areas. In our opinion, this is due to the cultural level of the societies affected by conflict and to the historically acquired conviction that democracy is the best form of government for the region.

We must strengthen the United Nations capacity to prevent conflicts, to respond when conflict does erupt and to provide instruments for post-conflict peace-building. Peacemaking, peacekeeping and the building of sustainable peace are vital and interdependent elements of the same endeavour: the building of a lasting peace that ensures human security in all societies.

This can become even more concrete only in a framework of investment, production and secure markets for the goods that these societies produce. That would contribute not only to their economic and social development, but also to enhancing confidence, a fundamental element of peace.

The President: I thank the representative of Argentina for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. Caldas de Moura (Brazil): I am pleased to join previous speakers in welcoming you, Sir, and in congratulating your delegation on the initiative of holding this debate. I wish also to thank Deputy Secretary-General Louise Fréchette and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations for their contribution to this exercise.

When your delegation, Sir, started the preparations for this meeting, it circulated an *aide-mémoire* that set the ground for our debate. The Council was to address the subject of the culture of violence and intimidation created in the regrettably very frequent cases of internal conflicts that have plagued the post-cold-war period. In a constant and perverse rule, those conflicts thrive in an environment where small arms and light weapons are easily and inconceivably available.

I recall that the Council has addressed some aspects of this issue in the resolutions and presidential statements adopted in relation to the historical report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa. The Council also examined the question of the

maintenance of peace and security and post-conflict peace-building in a two-day open debate held in December 1998, when it reaffirmed its primary responsibility under the Charter for the maintenance of international peace and security and underlined

> "the need for close cooperation and dialogue between the bodies of the United Nations system, in particular those directly concerned in the field of post-conflict peace-building". [S/PRST/1998/38, p. 2]

In this context, I would like to recall the guidelines on conventional arms control/limitations and disarmament adopted by consensus at the 1999 substantive session of the Disarmament Commission. Those guidelines deal with practical measures relating to the collection, control, disposal and destruction of arms — especially small arms and light weapons — and the demobilization and integration of former combatants. They are quite detailed. They deal with post-conflict situations that result from internal conflict. The Council should avail itself of that important work.

In our view, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration cannot be dealt with separately. They have to be seen under the more embracing light of promoting peace, prosperity and stability. The rehabilitation of ex-combatants and their reintegration into society are essential.

We also understand that this process cannot be carried out successfully without a firm political commitment by the parties involved, for the dimension of such considerations extends well beyond the peace and security levels and thereby touches on a number of crucial social and economic issues. The political will shown by the parties must be supplemented by the support of the international community. We believe that the Economic and Social Council has a significant coordinating role to play in these efforts.

It is important for the international community to come up with a network of experienced arms experts from those Governments that contribute to peacekeeping operations, forming thus a worldwide database on these matters. In this connection, continuous attention must be paid by the international community during the post-conflict period, which may include the presence on the ground of follow-up political missions. Of course, we must accordingly call for the strict implementation of arms embargoes, where applicable, with particular emphasis on stopping the circulation of small and light arms and on avoiding their accumulation and proliferation.

The observance of such steps is fundamental to ensuring the positive outcome of a particular conflict in terms of building and strengthening peace. Where this has been the case, as in El Salvador, Nicaragua, Guatemala and Mozambique, for example, peace has been established and ex-combatants have been reintegrated into society. Where this has not been the case, as in Angola, tension and conflict linger on and the issues of disarmament, demobilization and the re-integration of ex-combatants fall behind the very pressing task of promoting peace.

To summarize, I wish to express the support of my delegation for the Council's request that the Secretary-General present, within a period of six months, his observations and recommendations to the Council, especially those concerning experiences and lessons learned that may enrich the Council's future review of these issues.

The President: I thank the representative of Brazil for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. Dangue Réwaka (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): Mr. President, your presence today demonstrates the commitment of your country, Malaysia, to the maintenance of world peace. We thank your delegation for having included this item on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants on the Security Council's agenda.

The upheavals in the world over the last decade have shown us a new kind of conflict, most often pitting communities in a single State against one another. The nature and the complexity of these conflicts, which we have seen in several parts of the world since the end of the cold war, should not make the Council shirk its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. To be sure, the Security Council was originally established to deal primarily with conflicts between States, but in this new era of history, the Council has to find the right solutions for these new situations.

It is the view of my delegation that it would be best to identify very early the causes of conflict before there is an actual armed clash. That being said, our discussion today does not include conflict prevention because we are dealing specifically with disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants.

We have to recognize that in the area of disarming, demobilizing and reintegrating ex-combatants, the United Nations has acquired considerable praiseworthy experience which should be extended. I have in mind, *inter alia*, successful operations in El Salvador, Guatemala, Mozambique, Liberia and the Central African Republic. The success of those missions was due in part to cooperation by the parties.

In the case of Angola, the cooperation of one party, UNITA, was greatly lacking in respect of the work of the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM) and the United Nations Observer Mission in Angola (MONUA).

Our experience should help us to prepare, and to implement with the greatest hope of success, future peacekeeping operations in, for example, the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Although every conflict has its own particular features, it would be wise once a ceasefire agreement is reached for the United Nations mission which is to monitor implementation of the agreement to have written into its mandate a directive to collect and destroy weapons seized, to monitor the transfer of illicit arms and to help in demining. In this context, the international community should not be miserly in the resources required in order to consolidate peace.

However important in themselves, these tasks are not sufficient to ensure a lasting peace. They should be supported by multi-sectoral action to strengthen peace. This assumes that the Security Council would make an appeal to the United Nations specialized agencies dealing with development, human rights, education and health. It also assumes that international financial institutions and bilateral donors would demonstrate greater flexibility in the granting of loans to countries emerging from conflicts, where the entire administrative, economic and social infrastructures have very often been destroyed.

While a cure is no substitute for prevention, my delegation can never overemphasize that the Security Council, in cooperation with regional and subregional bodies, should engage in conflict prevention. That would save innumerable lives and would help ensure the optimal use of resources and funds for the development which countries in conflict desperately need.

The President: I thank the representative of Gabon for the kind words he addressed to me.

Mr. Dejammet (France) (*spoke in French*): The Council is naturally honoured that this meeting is being held under the presidency of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Malaysia, and that it concerns a subject of great importance to my country.

In the decade that is now drawing to a close, no region in the world has been spared the heightening of internal conflict. These confrontations have often involved not only regular forces, but also armed groups, insurgents, militia — unbridled elements that vie with each other for control of parcels of land. Proliferation and spread of these armed groups, combined with the spread of light weapons, makes it even more difficult and complicated to conclude peace agreements and, where they do exist, to verify compliance.

Nothing can replace agreement by the parties concerned to apply peace arrangements in good faith. Here,the role of the Security Council is decisive even though peacekeeping and peace-building are the result of the efforts of all actors: international institutions, regional organizations, donor States and other funding bodies.

The disarmament of ex-combatants is, as Malaysia has rightly affirmed, a problem that deserves attention, and for which we must find a lasting solution. The recent case of Guinea-Bissau shows that the recovery and stocking of weapons, even under surveillance, does not adequately prevent fresh outbreaks of tension or the resumption of hostilities. Only the destruction of these weapons can really prevent their being used again; such provisions should be part of peace agreements sponsored by regional organizations and the United Nations. It is therefore necessary to include this objective of demobilization and demilitarization in a comprehensive approach. Collection of weapons must go hand in hand with demobilization and the reintegration into civil life of those who bear arms. Without the possibility of social rehabilitation, and reintegration into national life, ex-combatants will be inclined to take up their weapons again at the first hitch in a peace agreement or because they will simply see this as the best, or only way of improving their living conditions.

It has therefore clearly become essential for agreements putting an end to conflicts — in particular internal conflicts — to include precise provisions for implementation and verification in the context of disarmament, demobilization and the reintegration of ex-combatants.

But the international community must not evade its own political and financial responsibilities to make possible the implementation of these agreements and thereby ensure the success of peaceful transition. This effort on the part of the international community can take many forms. First, in the case of the deployment of authorized multinational forces or United Nations peacekeeping operations, the task of collecting, storing and, as I said earlier, destroying such weapons, could be included in the mandate of those forces and operations. Secondly, help could be provided for restructuring the armed forces in order to avoid the maintenance or re-establishment of militias, and, in some cases, for reintegrating some of the ex-combatants into established, controlled military structures. Lastly, and most important, economic assistance could be provided for rehabilitation and development so as to deter ex-combatants from ever using armed force again.

In all of these areas, more generous support from the international community would be necessary. The lack of financial resources is, in fact, the main obstacle to the implementation of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes. In this respect, we can only express regret that too often such activities depend on voluntary contributions which, by their very nature, are uncertain. In a number of cases, programmes were carefully developed by the United Nations, but in the end it was not possible to implement them because of a lack of funding.

The record of the efforts made over the past few years is thus extremely uneven. The saddest example is the resumption of fighting in Angola, which is a cruel illustration of the failure of a disarmament and demobilization operation envisioned in a peace agreement and conducted by and entrusted to the United Nations.

Fortunately, there are, on the other hand, some positive exceptions. In Mali, Mozambique, Cambodia, the Central African Republic and Guatemala, the tasks of disarmament, demobilization and the reintegration of ex-combatants into civilian life have been undertaken and successfully completed, in the first place, because of the involvement of the parties, but also because of the persistence and constancy of international assistance. The United Nations Operation in Mozambique, the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia, the Inter-African Mission to Monitor the Implementation of the Bangui Agreements (MISAB) and the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic (MINURCA) have played an essential role in applying the principles that we are discussing today. The two operations in the Central African Republic — one of which, MISAB, was a multinational operation entrusted exclusively to Africans, the other, MINURCA, being a United Nations mission — succeeded in recovering and keeping under control over 90 per cent of the heavy weapons and 60 per cent of the light weapons that had been circulating during three uprisings that broke out in 1996. A demobilization programme was developed with the assistance of United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and we should pay particular tribute to the work of UNDP in this field. UNDP has played a fundamental role in the demilitarization of the Central African Republic, an operation which is preserving respect for civilian life.

We must bear these examples in mind in dealing with the problems arising today in several post-conflict situations, situations that completely justify the statement made by the Deputy Secretary-General, Ms. Fréchette, to whom we express our gratitude.

In Guinea-Bissau, it is now truly essential for the weapons-collection operation initiated by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) to resume fully and to succeed and for the combatants to be demobilized, thereby contributing to the stabilization of the country as it prepares for elections.

We are pleased that an agreement has just been signed by the parties in Sierra Leone, and we understand very well how essential this is to our British friends. That agreement includes a section devoted to disarmament, cantonment, demobilization and the reintegration of combatants. The United Nations, which is involved through the United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL), working together with the parties in Sierra Leone and with ECOMOG — the competent regional organization — must see to it that this task is successfully completed if we truly want that country, which has been at war for eight years, to rediscover peace, with its attendant benefits, in particular the return of refugees. And we know that almost 400,000 refugees are in the neighbouring country of Guinea.

The same can be said about the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Again, the news is good, although the situation is fragile. The success and the solidity of the ceasefire agreement that has just been signed by the warring parties will require the recovery of weapons and the demobilization of combatants from the many armed groups, militias and rebels that have been present in the Great Lakes region for a number of years.

The task is considerable. That is another reason why this debate, convened by Malaysia, is so timely and important.

We must also talk about Kosovo, where, in accordance with Security Council resolution 1244 (1999), it is the duty of the international security presence to demilitarize the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) and the other Albanian armed groups, as well as to establish a safe environment for the civilian population. That is necessary if we want peace to be restored and the provisions of the important resolution adopted here to be fully implemented.

Those are the reasons why we are grateful for your country's initiative, Mr. President, which deals with concrete problems that relate to several conflicts being dealt with by the Security Council. The presidential statement that will be adopted at the end of this debate will confirm the importance the Council attaches to this question, and, above all, its determination, stimulated by the statements made today, to find answers. It will then be up to the Council to embody in each case the principles and recommendations that it will endorse in that statement.

The President: I thank the representative of France for the kind words he addressed to me.

Mr. Burleigh (United States of America): It is an honour, Sir, to have you preside over our meeting today, and I thank you for doing so. I also wish to thank the Deputy Secretary-General for her opening statement.

The past few years of United Nations peacekeeping have repeatedly reminded us of the brutal and complex nature of today's conflicts. Internal struggles are often coupled with a profusion of legal and illegal arms, thus fuelling ever-greater levels of violence. In the event that a peace agreement is reached between warring factions, the Security Council can and must take active steps to help stem further violence.

For this reason, we applaud the efforts of Malaysia, as President of the Council, to highlight the important role that disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants play in the prevention of further violence and the reconstruction of civil society.

The political will of the parties in conflict to abide by a peace agreement and disarm cannot be overemphasized. Without such will, there is little the United Nations can effectively do. Angola is but one glaring and unfortunate example of a potential success that has turned into failure. Despite the United Nations having successfully disarmed and demobilized more than 50,000 ex-combatants of the União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola (UNITA), their hard fought gains were quickly lost due to a lack of commitment by UNITA to abide by the peace accords.

In Sierra Leone, the United States is encouraged by the peace agreement that was signed yesterday in Lomé. Securing lasting peace in that war-torn country, however, will not be easy. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations anticipates, I believe, that more than 33,000 combatants will have to be disarmed and reintegrated into Sierra Leonean society before peace can be assured. This is a formidable task.

In order to succeed in our future endeavours, we must learn from past experiences and seek innovative ways to make disarmament and demobilization more effective. To this end, we are encouraged by the excellent work of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations Lessons Learned Unit which is planning to finalize a report on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration later this year.

Similarly, the United States is encouraged by the work of the Department for Disarmament Affairs, which held a workshop in Guatemala City in November 1998 on weapons collection and the integration of former combatants into civil society — the experiences of Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua and Colombia. All of these efforts, along with the recent United Nations Disarmament Commission's working paper on practical disarmament, will significantly add to the international community's understanding of this important topic.

One creative and innovative idea in the area of disarmament of small arms and light weapons came from a trip last year by Under-Secretary-General Dhanapala — who I am happy to see with us today — when he visited Albania, where the Secretariat helped develop an idea to empower local Albanian leaders to collect and exchange arms for local community civil construction projects. In the past, cash-for-arms programmes have done little to help improve local economies or keep arms from ex-combatants. This new approach of trading local infrastructure for arms may offer an alternative to previous efforts in the field of disarmament.

Despite the success of these new initiatives, it is not sufficient merely to collect arms. The international community must also take steps to control the flow of

legal and illicit arms to areas of conflict. All of our nations which sell small arms and light weapons, or which are involved in the traffic flow of these weapons, bear responsibility for turning a blind eye to the destruction they cause. We should act together now to curb arms transfers to zones of conflict.

To this end I would like to highlight some of the ideas Secretary of State Madeleine Albright advanced during the United Nations ministerial meeting on Africa last year, as well as arms-control initiatives the United States has undertaken at the international and national levels. Secretary Albright has proposed pursuit of a global convention based on the path-breaking Organization of American States convention against illicit trafficking. We should conclude negotiations on the global convention as soon as possible. The United States also supports the United Nations Crime Commission's work on illicit arms trafficking, as well as the European Union's Code of Conduct on Arms Transfers. We will seek to ensure better coordination with the European Union in our respective arms-transfers policies. On the national level the United States has enacted legislation tightening gun-brokering by companies involved in international arms transfers.

My delegation would like to draw a distinction between disarmament and demobilization, which we generally view to be under the purview of the Security Council, and reintegration, which we generally view to be a post-conflict peace-building, or development, activity. The reintegration of former combatants into their societies falls into a grey area between the two areas of international assistance: relief and development. In order for combatants to be successfully reintegrated, they must be able to find work in other areas of their country's economy. To this end, the United States is pleased to see that the humanitarian segment of the Economic and Social Council in Geneva, which will begin in a few days, will be taking up the subject of international cooperation and coordination in the response to humanitarian emergencies, particularly the transition from relief to rehabilitation, reconstruction and development.

The fact that two major organs of the United Nations — the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council — are looking into this matter is an indication of the importance that demobilization and reintegration of soldiers has on civil society in countries racked by internal conflict. It is also a reflection and recognition of the complexity of the challenge faced in such an effort, whether in Central America, in Africa or in Kosovo.

Finally, the existence of child soldiers is an unfortunate reality in many of today's conflicts. Such children are subjected to horrors that often have a brutalizing effect on young, fragile psyches. Not only must children be given productive activities to prevent them from turning to violence, but they must be taught that there is another way of life besides that of guns, destruction and mayhem.

In my previous assignment I was able, in Sri Lanka, to observe at first hand the complex challenge and difficulty involved in stopping the use of child soldiers once such a practice has begun. In that context especially, the work of the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflicts should be supported and commended.

We look forward to the statements of non-members of the Council, especially those who have had experience in taking practical and effective steps to implement and to sustain, in the context of their own societies and their own histories, the theoretical concepts we are discussing today. And again, I would like to thank you, Sir, and your delegation for holding an open debate on this most important topic. And thank you again for your presence here today.

The President: I thank the representative of the United States for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. Jagne (Gambia): My delegation extends to you, Sir, a very warm welcome to New York and thanks you for organizing this open debate on such an important issue. We are honoured to see you presiding over this meeting of the Security Council, Mr. Minister.

In the discharge of its mandate for the maintenance of international peace and security, the Security Council is nowadays faced with very complex conflict situations. These conflicts are mostly within the borders of one State, but have international implications. Some of them involve large numbers of factions, militias and armed groups over which Governments often have little or no control. The massive flow of small arms also adds to the complexity of the conflicts, which in turn require a great deal of investment in terms of resources in the search for a lasting solution. Besides, these efforts can be extremely time-consuming. Therefore, in the search for a durable peace in any conflict situation, one fundamental objective is to avoid a recurrence of the conflict. This is why the issues of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants are so crucial.

There are instances where fighting continues notwithstanding the presence of a United Nations peacekeeping or peace-building mission on the ground. In order to avoid such situations, it is important that the warring parties are disarmed at the outset. This, however, depends to a large measure, on the one hand, on the political will of the parties to end the conflict, and on their commitment to surrender their weapons, on the other hand.

There are instances where combatants tend to hold on to their weapons as trophies symbolizing their participation in what they may view as a noble cause. In other instances, because of security concerns or other hidden motives, the incentives for surrendering weapons are very small. Acts of banditry are common examples.

The international community must, however, find ways to ensure that in peacekeeping or peace-building operations, combatants are effectively disarmed to avoid a recurrence of the conflict. This objective could be achieved by first, incorporating clear terms for disarmament in peace agreements and giving a clear and comprehensive mandate to the peacekeeping or peace-building operation; and second, by devising an appropriate and workable scheme of incentives to induce voluntary handover of weapons. A scheme of incentives would, however, require the financial support of the international community.

Demobilization of ex-combatants is also an important aspect in the quest for a lasting settlement of a conflict. As clearly indicated by the Deputy Secretary-General in her statement this morning, this process includes the registration, medical examination of combatants, and the provision of their immediate basic needs, such as transportation to their communities, or even their absorption into a unified force. In this connection, the situation in Sierra Leone could very well constitute a real test case, as flagged by the United Kingdom delegation, especially as regards child soldiers.

We agree that demobilization is a necessary complement of disarmament. It is the next stage in the sequence of events. It is, however, often regarded as the responsibility of humanitarian and development agencies. As such, funds are not usually available for this purpose under a peacekeeping mandate. Our delegation is of the view that, while there is merit in the sharing of responsibilities, adequate funding arrangements should be made to avoid citing the lack of funds as the reason for the premature termination of such an important process with all its attendant negative consequences.

The next stage in the sequence is reintegration, which also suffers the same fate. With the exception of the perpetrators of war crimes, who should be pursued and brought to justice, it is an open secret that the integration of ex-combatants into society is not only desirable but also necessary. Failure to do so properly often leads to a rise in banditry and other violent crimes. In countries where there are serious economic hardships, programmes to assist ex-combatants to adapt successfully into productive civilian life is fundamental. Without such programmes, a fragile peace could be easily derailed.

We recognize that a reintegration programme for ex-combatants is a long-term socio-economic goal. Peacekeeping plans should take this fact into consideration and make provision for the continuation of the process even after the conclusion of a peacekeeping operation.

In this connection, it is equally important to bear in mind the special needs of vulnerable groups in society such as women, the elderly and, in particular, children. They should be given special attention. We therefore reiterate our support for the efforts of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict and encourage him to continue to advocate for the special needs of former child soldiers.

Before I conclude, I would like to touch on the related issue of the massive flow of small arms in many conflict situations, particularly in Africa. It is estimated that over 500,000 small arms are in circulation in the continent. The availability of such arms fuels existing conflicts and sparks new ones. The adoption of a moratorium on the import and export of such arms to regions in conflict is becoming a compelling necessity. Other mechanisms to deal with this situation should also be explored.

Like other delegations, we feel that the Security Council should continue its engagement in the discussion of the important issues of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants in a peacekeeping environment. We therefore support the idea of the Secretary-General submitting a report to the Council on his observations and recommendations on principles and guidelines on the subject and lessons learned to facilitate further the consideration of this matter.

The President: I thank the representative of the Gambia for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. van Walsum (Netherlands): It is a great pleasure to see you, Sir, the Foreign Minister of Malaysia, in the Chair during this important meeting.

The Netherlands joins other delegations in welcoming Malaysia's timely initiative to devote an open Council debate to the subject of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. Like others, we have repeatedly advocated a fully integrated approach to the familiar string of preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, peacekeeping and post-conflict peace-building, but any delegation that tries to put this into practice by suggesting that the Council focus its attention on an element of that sequence which comes after the conclusion of a peace agreement will invariably meet the objection that the matter is already being discussed in other United Nations bodies.

We commend the Malaysian delegation for not having allowed itself to be deterred by this objection. Excessive fear of duplication stands in the way of the development of an integrated approach. It is right for the Security Council to discuss disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes because the success or failure of the reintegration of ex-combatants may be largely determined by decisions the Council will have to take in the earlier phases, that is, while it is still occupied with its core task of trying to bring an armed conflict to an end.

Over the past 10 years, a number of large-scale disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes have been set up and implemented, increasingly with the active involvement of the international community. The Netherlands has contributed to some of these programmes, such as those in Guatemala, Rwanda, Angola, Mali and Albania. Not all of these were success stories, but important lessons can be learned from all of them. In this connection, we welcome the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration principles and guidelines, which the Department of Peacekeeping Operations Lessons Learned Unit has recently released.

One of these lessons seems an obvious one, namely that without the political will of the parties concerned, it is difficult, if not impossible, to implement a disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme. It is true that political will cannot be enforced, but in the context of a truly integrated approach more could perhaps be done to stimulate it. From the very beginning of international involvement, parties could be made aware of their collective vital interest in a functioning disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme. They could indeed be made to realize that a credible disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme serves as an indication that parties take their commitment to peace seriously, and that the international community's willingness to contribute to the larger post-conflict peace-building process will largely depend on that perception.

It is essential that the Security Council pronounce itself on the importance of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration in any peace agreement. The fact that the subject is discussed in other bodies does not detract from that. It is the Security Council that can monitor and influence the drafting of a peace agreement from its initial stage and make sure that all elements conducive to a durable settlement are adequately incorporated in the document. Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, we believe, are among these elements. A conflict cannot simply be switched off, and a country where the fighting has ended must never be left to its own devices.

There is no issue where this is more evident than that of child soldiers. The problem of demobilization and reintegration, already quite intractable in general, becomes critically compounded where child soldiers are concerned. It is obvious that ex-combatant children will require a high degree of supervision for a considerable length of time. A country that demobilizes its child soldiers but then fails to accompany them until they have been fully integrated into civilian society, is placing a ticking time bomb at its own foundations.

Child soldiers may need to be re-educated, they may require treatment, but they cannot be held accountable the way their adult fellow ex-combatants are. This will often be difficult enough, for some of the worst atrocities have been committed by child soldiers. As to the accountability of adults, however, there should be no doubt. The Netherlands delegation has consistently maintained that accountability and reconciliation are not incompatible. On the contrary, we believe that lasting peace is not attainable without accountability. This principle should always be fully reflected in every programme of reintegration of ex-combatants.

The representative of Finland will later in the debate make a substantive contribution to our deliberations on behalf of the European Union. It goes without saying that the Netherlands fully associates itself with her statement.

The President: I thank the representative of the Netherlands for his kind words to me.

I shall now make a statement in my capacity as Minister for Foreign Affairs of Malaysia.

I should like to express my sincere appreciation to the Deputy Secretary-General for her most illuminating statement on the subject of our discussion this morning. May I request the Deputy Secretary-General to convey Malaysia's thanks to the Secretary-General for his own support and personal commitment to our effort in the Council to provide greater focus on this subject. I should also like to thank members of the Council for their support for this initiative taken by Malaysia. We are especially grateful for their encouragement and cooperation in crystallizing ideas relevant to the Council's discussion. We are also very appreciative of the cooperation given to us by the Secretariat and by Member States on this initiative.

Over the last few years the Security Council has discussed questions specifically related to preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, peacekeeping and post-conflict peace-building and has issued presidential statements on them. Malaysia welcomes the Council's willingness to continue with this discussion. We believe that it is important for the Council to visit and revisit these questions on a regular basis, while addressing itself to the immediate and pressing problems arising from various conflict situations occurring around the world.

Malaysia strongly believes that in exercising its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security under the Charter, the Council should not be preoccupied mainly with the specific conflict situations on its agenda. The Council must be able, from time to time, to discuss thematic issues or receive orientation briefings on cross-cutting issues which could help the Council in making decisions that will ultimately bring about positive results. We consider the discussion on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants in a peacekeeping environment to be an important contribution to this process. It will allow the Council to contribute substantively to the enhancement and effectiveness of United Nations peacekeeping and peace-building activities.

The Council is already fully aware of the issues involved. Increasingly, the United Nations has had to deal with conflicts which are primarily internal in nature but with some degree of international implications. They involve warring parties and factions which engage in bitter, and often protracted, fighting that threatens political institutions, damages the economy and causes severe social problems. Some of the parties resort to practices and activities which clearly violate human rights and international humanitarian law. In many cases, these activities are carried out with a misguided sense of impunity. This inevitably results in a pervasive culture of violence and intimidation.

Thousands of innocent civilians have been internally displaced or forced to become refugees. International workers, including United Nations personnel, have also become unfortunate victims in the ongoing conflicts. The availability of arms to conflicting parties — in particular, as mentioned by previous speakers, small arms and light weapons — has further complicated the situation. The alarming involvement of child soldiers has added another dimension which requires urgent and special attention. In the context of such an environment, the search for peace invariably becomes a long and arduous process. While peace can be quite elusive in these circumstances, sustainable peace becomes harder to achieve following any peace agreement if serious efforts are not made to address in a very comprehensive manner the questions of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants.

One of the primary objectives of peacekeeping is to create a safe and secure environment that will allow for the resumption of peaceful activities and normal life in society. Peacekeeping should also create conditions that will allow for serious post-conflict peace-building efforts to be carried out. Disarmament is a crucial prerequisite for the consolidation of peace and stability in countries emerging out of conflict. However, experience has shown that disarmament alone cannot guarantee the achievement of the long-term objectives of sustainable peace, stability and development. It has to be followed up with the effective demobilization of ex-combatants and their timely and peaceful reintegration into society. These three elements should be part of a continuous process that stretches from the peacekeeping phase to that of post-conflict peace-building.

Malaysia is fully cognizant of the complexities and sensitivities related to the task of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, especially in the types of conflicts with which the Council is increasingly confronted. This task can succeed only if there exists a will on the part of the parties involved in the conflict to accept and abide by the terms of such an exercise. We have noted that in recent years some measure of success has been achieved in a number of countries where disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes have been implemented. Malaysia

commends those Governments and warring parties which have embarked on these programmes as part of the overall effort to bring about sustainable peace in post-conflict situations. We recognize, as others do, that more needs to be done. In this regard, there has to be substantial support from the international community. We hope that the Security Council can take the lead in further generating such support which, we believe, has to be based on strong political will to assist in resolving conflicts and to help societies emerging out of those conflicts rebuild political, economic and social structures ravaged by war. In this regard, the special needs of child soldiers should be highlighted and given serious attention as a priority matter.

As noted by previous speakers, financing continues to be a problem in the implementation of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes. Protracted conflict naturally puts a severe strain on the resources of a country, especially one which, in the first place, is already in a dire economic situation. Obviously, the question of adequate financing needs to be addressed by all concerned. The international community needs to adopt a coordinated approach, taking into account the specific requirements of the three components of this continuous process. Malaysia believes that the various United Nations organs and bodies can work out arrangements which would satisfy the requirements of specific disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes in different post-conflict situations as well as providing for their engagement in accordance with their responsibilities under the Charter. Clearly, we cannot ignore the development aspects of post-conflict peace-building. Reintegration programmes in particular will require some amount of economic assistance.

Malaysia has gained some experience in demobilization and reintegration programmes as a result of an internal insurgency problem that lasted almost 50 years, ending only a decade ago. During those years, the Government had to spend vast sums on defence, mainly for counter-insurgency operations, while at the same time having to focus on development. Over time, soldiers and policemen had to be demobilized and reintegrated into civilian society as the security situation improved. This continuous demobilization and reintegration programme has been incorporated into the country's development plans. Ex-servicemen are given the opportunity to learn skills and to participate in useful economic activity upon retirement from active duty.

We recognize that Malaysia's experience may be unique to the situation which we faced. However, we have learned some very important lessons from it. We have been able to share some of this experience with other countries. For example, Malaysia was able to assist in the training of Namibian ex-combatants to prepare them for reintegration into society following Namibia's independence.

Malaysia believes that efforts to share experiences in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes should be encouraged. We look forward to the participation of Member States which have had some direct experience in such programmes in the Council's present discussion on this subject. We welcome the various seminars and conferences on this and other related subjects. We also appreciate the efforts of the Secretary-General, Member States and international and regional organizations aimed at developing general principles and guidelines for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants in a peacekeeping environment. We also note that United Nations bodies including the General Assembly and the Disarmament Commission have done very useful work in this regard.

Malaysia strongly believes that the United Nations should be given a greater role in peacemaking, peacekeeping and post-conflict peace-building, including in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants in a peacekeeping environment. Given the nature of present-day conflicts, the demands on the United Nations would be enormous. But with the necessary political will, allocation of resources and support from Member States and the international community, we believe the United Nations can succeed.

Malaysia would very much welcome a willingness on the part of the Security Council to address the issue under discussion today on a regular basis. We propose a further discussion of this issue by the Council on the basis of a report which we hope the Secretary-General could submit within six months. We feel that the Council and States Members of the United Nations should be able further to discuss some of the very useful work done by the Secretariat on principles and guidelines, as well as practices, experiences and lessons learned in respect of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants. The Council should be able to consider practical measures to guide future United Nations peacekeeping and peace-building efforts to ensure sustainable peace and security in various parts of the world.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

There are still a number of speakers remaining on the list. In view of the lateness of the hour, and with the concurrence of the members of the Council, I intend to suspend the meeting now.

The meeting was suspended at 1.15 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.4020 (Resumption 1)

Security Council

Fifty-fourth Year

Provisional

4020th Meeting

Thursday, 8 July 1999, 3.30 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Hasmy	(Malaysia)
Members:	Argentina	Mr. Petrella
	Bahrain	Mr. Al Dosari
	Brazil	Mr. Cordeiro
	Canada	Mr. Duval
	China	Mr. Shen Guofang
	France	Mr. Teixeira da Silva
	Gabon	Mr. Dangue Réwaka
	Gambia	Mr. Jagne
	Namibia	Mr. Andjaba
	Netherlands	Mr. van Walsum
	Russian Federation	Mr. Granovsky
	Slovenia	Mr. Türk
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Richmond
	United States of America	Mr. Burleigh

Agenda

Maintenance of peace and security and post-conflict peace-building

Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants in a peacekeeping environment

99-85576 (E)

This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, *within one week of the date of publication*, to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178.

The meeting was resumed at 3.30 p.m.

Mr. Andjaba (Namibia): The challenge of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants into civilian life is one with which the Government of the Republic of Namibia continues to grapple nine years after independence. We can therefore attest that a smooth and early transition to post-conflict peace-building is imperative for any country emerging from conflict. This is a truism, for the disarming and demobilization of ex-combatants does not by itself culminate in peace. For example, in our situation, generations were born in exile and thus had no attachment to the local lifestyle. For others, the long years of absence had placed them out of tune with the Namibian mode of life. Even more serious, most of the ex-combatants had no skills and thus could not be easily absorb into any possible employment. Many were too old to go to regular schools and too young to be persuaded into retirement. Hence, the Namibian Government decided to create a development brigade. In a nutshell, this is a mechanism to resettle, rehabilitate and reintegrate ex-combatants and their families. With the assistance of our private sector, the Government is in the process of addressing the problem, although many constraints remain.

Let me stress that ex-combatants are former enemies who still want to avenge past activities. In addition, while fighting for their cause, former fighters had high hopes that were never wholly realized, resulting in frustrations and sensitivities. Furthermore, due to the nature of the decentralized logistics of irregular forces, weapon caches will be littered all over the country and ex-combatants will have recourse to these weapons if disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes are not properly implemented, coordinated and pursued with determination.

It is in this context that my delegation underscores your initiative, Sir, to hold a much-needed debate on one of the most salient issues of post-conflict peace-building. Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration are all but stages in the process of post-conflict peace-building. If and when one stage is ignored, the process is left incomplete and the threat of recurrence of armed conflict is a reality. While conflict is exacerbated by the proliferation of arms, the causes are mostly economic and social in nature. Therefore, to many, armament and mobilization become a source of income, if not survival. It is no coincidence that it is most often the hungry, the illiterate and the destitute who become the easy prays of warlords in various conflicts situations.

Many parts of Africa today are plagued by hunger and malnutrition, yet the proliferation of arms presents a stark contrast. In the draft presidential statement which we shall adopt later today, it is rightly stated that

> "Disarmament and demobilization must take place in a secure and safe environment, which will give ex-combatants the confidence to lay down their arms".

Indeed, we have to ask ourselves what a secure and safe environment entails, because, more often than not, it is the absence of such an environment which creates conflict in the first place. Furthermore, and equally important, a combatant's confidence evolves around his or her weapons. When he or she is disarmed and demobilized, a state of fear, panic and insecurity creeps in. It is this uncertainty that makes disarmament and demobilization painful, albeit necessary.

In fact, the Secretary-General, in his report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa, specifically in post-conflict peace-building, summed it up very well when he said:

> "Societies that have emerged from conflict have special needs. To avoid a return to conflict while laying a solid foundation for development, emphasis must be placed on critical priorities such as encouraging reconciliation and demonstrating respect for human rights; fostering political inclusiveness and promoting national unity; ensuring the safe, smooth and early repatriation and resettlement of refugees and displaced persons; reintegrating ex-combatants and others into productive society; curtailing the availability of small arms; and mobilizing the domestic and international resources for reconstruction and economic recovery. Every priority is linked to every other, and success will require a concerted and coordinated effort on all fronts."[A/52/871, para. 66]

This is very important because, when all members of a society belong, they can all contribute to peace, stability and sustainable development to the benefit of all. The employment of ex-combatants should therefore be addressed in isolation from general employment, as this state of unemployment is fraught with devastating consequences for any country.

Reintegration of ex-combatants cannot be left to the countries involved alone. Not only is it financially challenging; it has other dimensions which also present constraints. Thus, the international community must seriously assist countries involved in post-conflict peace-building. Indeed, today we are managing the reintegration of our ex-combatants. This would not have been possible without the generous support and assistance of many countries, especially Malaysia. We are thus pleased, Mr. President, that you have taken the initiative to convene this important meeting addressing an area in which your Government has been seriously involved, especially in my country.

Giving employment to ex-combatants is a priority if post-conflict stability is to be achieved. The United Nations office for post-conflict peace-building needs to help fledgling democracies by means of a thorough reintegration of ex-combatants. Furthermore, efforts must be made to address problems, which may result in the re-emergence of conflicts. Premature withdrawal of a peace-keeping force is dangerous because belligerents rearm if presented with a vacuum. An inadequate response by the Security Council and the international community in general can also prolong a conflict, which in turn can render post-conflict peace-building very difficult. Sierra Leone and Angola are strong cases in point. My delegation hails the signing of the peace agreement for Sierra Leone. It is our sincere hope that this agreement will usher in lasting peace for Sierra Leone. However, the difficult task lies ahead. Indeed, the process of national reconciliation may prove hard, but we all hope that the people of Sierra Leone, who have endured the most abhorrent human rights abuses, will rise to the challenge in order to make peace in Sierra Leone a reality.

My delegation concurs with the proposed practical measures to promote the success of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants in a peacekeeping environment as outlined in the draft presidential statement. We also support the proposal for a report by the Secretary-General to the Security Council on this very important issue. It is our strong view that such a report must pay special attention to women and children, among others. Finally, we wish to reiterate that post-conflict peace-building is a multi-dimensional problem which the United Nations, and the Security Council in particular, has to address in a comprehensive and impartial manner if we are to build peace in any post-conflict situation.

The President: I thank the representative of Namibia for his kind reference to my country.

Mr. Shen Guofang (China) *(spoke in Chinese)*: Mr. President, the Chinese delegation was very pleased this morning to see the Foreign Minister of Malaysia, His Excellency Mr. Syed Hamid Albar, presiding over the Security Council's debate on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants in a peacekeeping environment. We would also like to thank the Deputy Secretary-General, Ms. Frechette, for her statement.

At present, the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants has become an important means applied in many United Nations peacekeeping operations. These efforts will contribute to the implementation of peace agreements, the prevention of the recurrence of conflicts and the maintenance of social stability. Like other delegations, we believe that today's open debate in the Council on this issue is both extremely timely and necessary. This situation exists in Africa, Asia and also in Europe and other regions.

It has increasingly affected regional stability and security. The Security Council bears the primary responsibility for the maintenance of peace and security, and this issue should therefore merit our full attention. Hence, China appreciates the initiative of Malaysia to call for an open debate on this question.

China believes that both in peacekeeping and in post-conflict peace-building, the United Nations should always follow the principles of non-interference in internal affairs and respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity. The same principles should apply to United Nations activities for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants. When a legitimate Government exists in the country involved, such actions should be taken only with the consent of that Government.

In cases where no legitimate Government exists, measures should be taken only after a peace agreement has already been signed and the conflicting parties have all pledged their support for the measures. Such measures should be carried out strictly in line with the specific Security Council mandate. Moreover, as the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants involve such sensitive issues as a country's armed forces and security, there should be resort to actions in this connection only when they are absolutely necessary, and they should be strictly limited to conflict regions where United Nations peacekeeping and post-conflict peace-building activities are being carried out.

Otherwise, the problems will not only not be resolved, but may be further complicated.

The issue of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants is also a very complex one, involving many agencies and departments in various fields. The relevant United Nations bodies should discharge their duties in their respective areas of competence in accordance with their division of labour, and should at the same time strengthen their coordination and cooperation so that their actions will be well orchestrated. In April 1999, the United Nations Disarmament Commission adopted a series of guidelines for disarmament measures in post-conflict situations, including the collection and destruction of weapons and demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants. These guidelines should be observed and implemented.

In the ever-changing international situation, peace, security and development are increasingly and inextricably intertwined. China believes that only when the issue of development is effectively addressed can the root causes of conflict and war be eliminated and the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants be realized effectively. This is the case especially in economically disadvantaged areas.

China has always favoured an important role for the United Nations in peacekeeping and post-conflict peace-building. To achieve sustainable peace in post-conflict regions, China supports the formulation and implementation of measures for the collection and disposal of weapons and the demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants and believes that a strict monitoring mechanism should be set up to oversee the implementation of these measures.

The President: I thank the representative of China for the kind words he addressed to my Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Mr. Duval (Canada) (*spoke in French*): I should like to begin by expressing our gratitude to Deputy Secretary-General Louise Fréchette for her statement to the Council this morning. The Secretary-General's interest in this issue is invaluable, and the statement from the Secretariat shows what deep consideration has been given to the subject under debate.

For Canada, the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants in a peacekeeping environment is a key component of the human security dimension of peacekeeping operations. Since it launched a truly global peacekeeping operation in Namibia 10 years ago, the United Nations has gained extensive experience in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants. We welcome the fact that Namibia is present at the Council table today to share its experience with us. The challenge for the Council today is to translate this experience into clear, concise and comprehensive guidelines which can be applied, as appropriate, to all new peacekeeping missions mandated by it.

We are sure that our debate today will contribute to the achievement of that goal because of the thought and the concerted effort of bodies, agencies and Members of the United Nations — both recipients and contributors — that have gone into it. It is a concerted effort without which words will not be transformed into action.

An effective disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme should aim to turn all ex-combatants — men, women and, all too often, child soldiers — into productive members of society. That is central to beginning any overall process of reconciliation. But clearly, the conditions favourable for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration do not simply happen: they must be created. Failure in disarmament and demobilization in the short term can result in an immediate relapse into war, just as incomplete reintegration in the medium term often leads to civil unrest, especially armed crimes committed by ex-combatants. A properly planned and implemented programme of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration is an important and effective instrument for the general reconstruction of post-conflict society.

For such a programme to be successful, Canada believes that all three of its components — the disarmament, the demobilization and the reintegration — must be in place at the beginning of a mission, continue throughout the peacekeeping mandate and remain even after the peacekeepers have left.

The success of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes depend upon, among other things, an adequate supply of financial resources at every stage, the political determination of all the parties to the dispute to succeed, and, finally, close coordination between the military, police and civilian components.

Conflict affects all elements of society, and each of these elements must therefore be involved in the return to

security. Canada is convinced that effective disarmament, demobilization and reintegration are dependent on the participation of those parts of the population most affected by the conflict. It should also be emphasized that one of the main guiding principles for any disarmament, demobilization and reintegration mechanism is the enhancement of local, national and even regional capacities through consultation, engagement and active participation in all aspects of the programme. Any political or technical advice provided by the United Nations must respect this principle. We recall the effective cooperation between the United Nations, the Organization of American States and the parties to the conflict in Central America, which allowed the ex-combatants to effect a successful transition.

(*spoke in English*)

I would like to say a few words in conclusion about the role and responsibilities of the Security Council. It is in the creation of a new peacekeeping mission that the Security Council plays the critical role in ensuring that the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration task is clear. It must be clear to all parties to the conflict, to all peacekeepers — military, police and civilian alike — and to the civilian population. Nothing will dissipate public confidence faster, embolden hardliners on all sides more quickly, or undermine the effectiveness of peacekeepers than if United Nations contingents appear confused or are in disarray as to the rules of the road.

The spread of small arms is a major destabilizing element in a post-conflict situation. Canada firmly believes that, where appropriate, the Council must mandate missions which include provision for the immediate implementation of a comprehensive programme combining both voluntary elements and mandatory measures for short-term disarmament and longer-term weapons management. Likewise, the Council's role cannot stop with mandating disarmament. Demobilization begins where disarmament stops. The Council must recognize that in these situations demobilization can proceed only if the conditions exist for all ex-combatants to feel secure. And, if necessary, the mission must include civilian police monitors, human rights observers and military observers and forces, in order to guarantee that demobilization is undertaken in a safe environment.

Finally, the Council must recognize that reintegration must be addressed if the first phases are to be ultimately successful. Disarmament needs to be tied to the broader process of post-conflict reconciliation and reconstruction. Here, respect for the rule of law, for democratic principles and for human rights must underscore the creation of a secure environment and the promotion of reconciliation. These are the necessary foundations for longer term reconstruction and development if we want them to succeed.

Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration will not end with the completion of a peacekeeping mandate. The deployment of a follow-on political mission, mandated by the Security Council, will ensure coordination and continuity. Close liaison with the humanitarian and development communities will be important. Of particular concern to Canada is the large number of child soldiers who are voluntarily or involuntarily involved in many conflicts. Consideration must be given to developing appropriate disarmament, demobilization and reintegration mechanisms to address their especially complex situation.

The experience of the United Nations and other organizations with disarmament, demobilization and the reintegration of ex-combatants in a peacekeeping environment has been reviewed and analyzed. There is now an emerging consensus on both general principles and practical guidelines for effective disarmament, demobilization and reintegration planning and implementation in a coherent and comprehensive fashion. It is imperative that the Security Council take advantage of this information when authorizing new peacekeeping missions. To this end, therefore, Canada would suggest that the Secretary-General be requested to submit his recommendations to the Security Council concerning ways and means to promote the full implementation of best practices for the effective planning, implementation and monitoring of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration in a peacekeeping environment.

In concluding, I would be remiss if I did not take this opportunity to express the sincere thanks of the Canadian delegation for the initiative taken by Malaysia in bringing this very important issue before the Security Council. The issue of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants in a peacekeeping environment is a topical one that is likely to be relevant to the deliberations of the Council in the next few months. We commend and thank you, Mr. President, for your efforts in undertaking this most timely debate, and we wholeheartedly support the draft presidential statement.

The President: I thank the representative of Canada for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Finland. I invite her to take a seat at the Council table and to make her statement.

Ms. Korpi (Finland): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union — Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania and Slovakia — and the associated countries Cyprus and Malta, as well as the European Free Trade Association countries and members of the European Economic Area Iceland and Norway, align themselves with this statement.

The European Union welcomes the Security Council discussion on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants as timely and pertinent. We highly commend your initiative, Sir. It highlights the growing importance of multidimensional approaches to the solution of today's conflicts. We also welcome your idea that techniques for executing disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes and the problems associated with them should be studied in depth to help enhance United Nations peacekeeping activities. I also would like to thank the Deputy Secretary-General for her introduction to this issue from the United Nations point of view.

The international community faces enormous challenges in dealing with the complexity of conflict management today. The nature of the conflicts has become more and more complex since the fall of the bipolar cold-war order. Most of the new conflicts in the 1990s have been of a civil-war type. One of the most disturbing factors is the growing involvement of children in such conflicts. Peacekeeping can no longer be viewed as a distinct and isolated event. Instead, it should be viewed as a part of a wider process, ranging from preventive diplomacy to post-conflict peace-building.

Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants have been important parts of a number of peacekeeping operations with a view to strengthening post-conflict peace-building. Such practical disarmament measures have a special relevance to conflicts that are approaching solution, to recently ended conflicts, and, as a consequence, to preventing a given conflict from re-emerging. Without success in this area it is hardly possible to create the stable, just and democratic political environment which in turn is an indispensable precondition for sustainable human, economic and social development.

The United Nations has been successful in resolving a number of conflicts. Many countries formerly in conflict have already gone several years without war, and there is a fair prospect of lasting peace. In these countries the conflict was successfully channelled into a legitimate political process, so that interests no longer had to be pursued by military means. The United Nations provided incentives for former combatants — many of whom had been pressed into service as children and had no other way of life — to demobilize. In other cases the United Nations has not been successful. Both instances merit a thorough evaluation of the lessons learned.

The European Union has played an active role in efforts to combat the excessive and destabilizing accumulation and spread of small arms and light weapons, and invites all countries to support the aims set out in the joint action that it adopted in December 1998. The previous year, 1997, the European Union adopted a programme for preventing and combating illicit trafficking in conventional arms. The European Union supports a proportionate and integrated approach to security and development. Through its joint action, the European Union has committed itself to promoting the inclusion of provisions for arms collection, control, disposal and/or destruction; for demobilization; and for the integration of ex-combatants into peace agreements between the parties to the conflict and into mandates of peace-support operations where appropriate. The Union will also provide financial and technical assistance to programmes and projects of the United Nations and other organizations, including non-governmental organizations. These undertakings may include, *inter alia*, weapons collection, demobilization and reintegration programmes. The European Union is funding in particular a pilot weapons-collection project in Albania. The project offers community-development assistance in exchange for weapons. The Union is studying proposals for the funding of similar projects elsewhere.

The international community should promote regional and collective approaches to disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants. In its first report, the United Nations Panel of Government Experts on Small Arms recommended a set of reduction and prevention measures to combat the destabilizing accumulation of small arms. The adoption by consensus at the United Nations Disarmament Commission in April this year of guidelines on conventional arms control/limitation and disarmament with particular emphasis on consolidation of peace represents a major step forward. The guidelines provide a valuable tool

which can assist the international community, as well as regions, subregions and countries directly affected. They should also be drawn upon in the design of mandates for future United Nations peacekeeping and preventive operations.

These guidelines contain specific recommendations for the collection, control, disposal and destruction of arms, especially small arms and light weapons, and conversion of military facilities. They address the criteria required for a successful and well-organized programme for the demobilization of combatants, as well as measures needed for their effective integration into civil society.

The European Union looks forward to seeing the results of the work already done by the Lessons Learned Unit of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and encourages the Department to build on these guidelines in the planning management, implementation and monitoring of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration in future peacekeeping operations.

The European Union also welcomes the work and the initiatives of the group of interested States. This group supports concrete projects of practical disarmament and serves as a forum for the exchange of information about relevant lessons learned in the field of practical disarmament. The initiative has the support of the Secretary-General.

War-torn societies have great difficulties in offering socially and economically viable alternatives for ex-combatants. The promotion of sustainable employment and skills training should be a priority in integration programmes for former combatants, and international assistance should be made available for this purpose. At the same time, States should be encouraged to reflect in their educational and economic programmes the integration of combatants and to secure domestic resources for such activities, supplemented as appropriate by external support, in order to provide, *inter alia*, for effective follow-up action. The needs of different target groups among the reintegrated combatants, including vulnerable groups such as children, should be identified and options designed for their integration to suit local conditions. The reintegration of child soldiers, representing the next generation, requires special measures, such as medical and psychological treatment, as well as education, housing and other similar measures.

Any reintegration has to be complemented by systems of accountability and accompanied by proper legal procedures. In this context, lessons learned, for example, in South Africa or in the former Yugoslavia — recently in Bosnia and Herzegovina — could prove useful.

In 1996 the European Union adopted legislation on rehabilitation and reconstruction operations in developing countries. Among the priorities of this regulation is the social reintegration of refugees, displaced persons and demobilized troops. Potential partners can represent international, regional, national, local or community-based organizations, non-governmental organizations and public or private operators alike.

The European Union is especially concerned by the extension of armed conflicts and the huge influx of arms and military equipment into conflict areas in Africa. More than a third of African countries are at present or have recently been involved in conflicts. The European Union, bearing in mind Security Council resolution 1209 (1998) on arms flows in Africa, considers that in the search for a long-term solution to conflicts, high priority should be given to measures that curb arms supplies, the illicit circulation of arms, and the illicit trafficking of gold, diamonds and other lucrative commodities that may finance the arms.

The European Union will actively contribute to the mechanism set up to help in the implementation of the West African moratorium, adopted within the Economic Community of West African States at the initiative of Mali. Its main purpose is to prevent illicit manufacture of and trade in small arms, as well as to make sure that these weapons are collected and put out of use. The Mali initiative is a pioneering project and could serve as an example in other regions with similar problems.

In Central America, the European Union has paid increasing attention to the reintegration of demobilized ex-combatants from both sides of the conflict into the economic and social life of their communities through financing important development programmes in Guatemala, El Salvador and Nicaragua. These programmes have shown very promising results. Ex-combatants who have participated in the reconciliation programmes have turned out to be active promoters of local development processes.

At the Fifteenth San José Ministers of the European Union and Central American countries agreed on the need to step up efforts to increase the participation of citizens in political life in order to further consolidate democracy in Central America. Needless to say, this also

includes former actors of the internal conflict. Ministers also welcomed the European Union Joint Action on small arms and light weapons and underlined their determination to cooperate more closely in this field.

Given the reality of present-day conflicts, the Security Council should consider the following. First, it should give direction to United Nations peace mediation efforts so that disarmament, demobilization and reintegration are properly included in peace agreements. Secondly, the Council should see to it that enabling United Nations resolutions integrate disarmament, demobilization and reintegration as part of the peacekeeping operations mandate, with adequate funding and implementation follow-up. The Security Council should address the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration issue on a regular basis in the context of reviewing peacekeeping operations.

But the key is that disarmament, demobilization and reintegration need a third D: development. Disarming and demobilizing troops and reintegrating ex-combatants cannot be done in a vacuum. The Security Council should endorse what is known as an integrated and proportionate approach to security and development. Perhaps a part of official development assistance should be devoted to the consolidation of peace and reconciliation. Bilateral and multilateral development agencies should direct part of their assistance to the rapid re-establishment of income-earning activities.

Such assistance can help ensure the early success of practical disarmament measures. A key objective must be to allow the administrative capacity and infrastructure that were damaged during the conflict to be rebuilt in a process of conversion from a culture of war to a culture of peace. In the end, it is the parties to a peace agreement who are responsible for its full implementation and who alone can provide the best guarantee for the consolidation of peace and for the essential economic and political regeneration of their societies.

The President: I thank the representative of Finland for her kind words addressed to me and my delegation.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Guatemala. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Estévez-López (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): I wish, first of all, to thank you, on behalf of my delegation, for having convened this open meeting of the Council, thereby affording us an opportunity to give a brief account of the process of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants into society in Guatemala.

As is known, on 29 December 1996, the Government of Guatemala concluded with the Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca (URNG) the Agreement on a Firm and Lasting Peace, which brought 36 years of armed conflict in Guatemala to an end. This development created the strategic elements required to carry out the fundamental transformations enabling Guatemala to consolidate its political democracy and comprehensive development within the framework of a multi-ethnic and multicultural society.

The Agreements on the Definitive Ceasefire, on the Basis for the Reincorporation of the URNG into Legality and on the Strengthening of Civilian Power and the Role of the Army in a Democratic Society laid down valuable guidelines. All matters pertaining to the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of the ex-combatants into civil society.

With the entry into force of the peace agreements, a total of eight camps were set up in five of the departments of the country. Each of those was provided with a container into which long-range weapons were to be deposited as and when the various groups of combatants arrived. These operations were carried out in accordance with the provisions of the agreement. Small arms were not handed over until the process was completed.

For this purpose the Security Council, by its resolution 1094 (1997), adopted on 20 January 1997, approved the dispatch of 155 military observers to participate in the disarmament process. It was to them that the ex-combatants handed over their arms. After being counted and registered, these arms were formally delivered to the Minister of the Interior of Guatemala on 17 May 1997.

The programme, carried out by the special Commission for Reintegration, included 5,200 URNG members, together with their families, totalling some 30,000 persons. The Commission, which officially wound up its work on 8 December 1998, consisted of representatives of the Government, the URNG, the United Nations, the United States Agency for International Development, the European Union and Spain. All these bodies participated in an advisory

capacity, while the United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala did so as an observer.

The Commission succeeded in establishing the best possible conditions for incorporating the URNG members into the political, economic, social and cultural life of the country, within a framework of dignity, security, legal guarantees and the full exercise of their legal rights and duties as citizens, by the dates specified in the agreement on the chronology of the process. Matters such as training and access to land and housing have been part of the socio-economic integration of the ex-combatants.

To complete the picture, I must mention the official registration of the URNG as a political party, which, in alliance with three other political parties, will participate in the general elections to be held on 7 November 1999.

The incorporation of the URNG into the legal process and hence the every day life of the country has been a process that epitomizes the spirit of reconciliation prevailing among Guatemalans. In rural areas, ex-combatants have, in many instances, returned to their places of origin and, as a rule, have been well received, even though other inhabitants of the particular locality may have fought on the opposite side during the conflict.

In the political and social life of urban areas, the presence of the URNG has from the outset been looked upon as something entirely normal, and this, no doubt, has been a factor that has extended and heightened the spirit of pluralism. This is particularly important in a country which, like Guatemala, has for so long suffered from the barriers and prejudices arising from discrimination and intolerance. At the same time, the armed forces has been reduced by about one third and, as with URNG ex-combatants, support has been provided for the integration of these former soldiers into civilian life. The success of the process as a whole is recognized by all the participants and has been achieved without serious criminal acts, threats, obstructive actions or any other type of aggression or violence.

Finally, Guatemalans wish, once again, to thank all those, including of course the members of the Council, who have offered us their support. Guatemalans continue to believe in the possibility of a true process of peace that, despite the problems it has had to face, continues to move forward, transforming our country into a democratic and pluralistic society.

The President: I thank the representative of Guatemala for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of South Africa. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Badenhorst (South Africa): My delegation wishes to commend you, Sir, for initiating this important and timely debate on demobilization, disarmament and reintegration of ex-combatants in a peacekeeping environment. Given the international community's growing concern over the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and, in particular, its impact on the socio-economic development of countries in post-conflict situations, this topic rightfully deserves the focused attention of the Council.

The report on small arms submitted by the Secretary-General rightly identified incomplete disarmament of former combatants and mandates of peacekeeping or post-conflict peace-building operations which did not cover small arms and light weapons disarmament as major causes of the excessive and destabilizing accumulations of these weapons. In this regard, one of the recommendations stemming from the report was that

> "consideration should be given to the establishment of a disarmament component in peacekeeping operations undertaken by the United Nations". [A/52/298, annex, para. 79 (d)]

After many years of armed conflict in southern Africa, the escalating problem of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons can be related to the availability of vast quantities of these weapons, which recirculated in the region due to incomplete disarmament programmes after peace operations were set up. As a consequence, this renewed proliferation is having a devastating effect on the rebuilding of civil society in the region. Regional peace and democratization initiatives are curtailed by the excessive accumulation of these weapons, especially by criminal groups fuelling crime and violence for their own financial gain.

My Government believes that a political commitment is required to address this issue as a priority. South Africa further believes that addressing the proliferation of small arms and light weapons must be approached in a way that includes arms control and disarmament, post-conflict peace-building, conflict

prevention and socio-economic development. Holistic approaches should be adopted to stem this proliferation problem. Regionally, political leaders should commit themselves to solving this problem through effective regional cooperation and security action, addressing the underlying demand factors such as criminal activities and socio-economic underdevelopment. In addition, strict control should be exercised in the transfer of small arms and light weapons, and where appropriate, surplus stockpiles of small arms and light weapons should be destroyed. With regard to the establishment of a disarmament component in peacekeeping operations undertaken by the United Nations, South Africa believes that the mandates of future peacekeeping operations, as appropriate in specific post-conflict situations, should include weapons collection, disposal and destruction.

To this end, South Africa welcomed the adoption of resolution 1209 (1998), on illicit arms flows to and in Africa. South Africa strongly supports the role of the Security Council in addressing the issue of small arms and light weapons disarmament in the context of peacekeeping operations. It is imperative that the mandate of any future peacekeeping operation should include the implementation of a comprehensive disarmament and arms management programme which will continue into the post-conflict reconstruction phase. Of particular relevance would be the consideration of practical ways to work with States in implementing national, regional or subregional programmes for voluntary weapons collection, disposal and destruction, including the possibility of the establishment of a fund to support such programs. In this regard, resolution 1209 (1998) gives recognition to the important contribution of programmes for voluntary weapons collection, disposal and destruction in specific post-conflict situations in Africa, stating also that the Council should consider including, as appropriate, means to facilitate the successful conduct of such programmes in the mandates of future peacekeeping operations it authorizes in Africa on the basis of recommendations by the Secretary-General.

The South African Government has declared the combating of small arms proliferation as a priority and has implemented a coherent strategy to deal with this problem in all its aspects. This strategy represents an integral and holistic approach, to introduce stricter control measures and eventually to remove the causal factors of small arms proliferation. My Government has further decided to effect disposal via destruction of all State-held, redundant, obsolete, unserviceable and confiscated semi-automatic and automatic weapons of a calibre smaller than 12.7 millimetres. In addition to the destruction of many tons of confiscated and obsolete small arms and ammunition, South Africa will have destroyed by the end of this year more than 260,000 redundant, obsolete, unserviceable and confiscated small arms of various calibres currently stored by its National Defence Force.

In order to deal with the availability and recirculation of vast quantities of small arms and light weapons in the region, South Africa has entered into agreements with several other southern African States with a view to curbing the trafficking of illegal small arms and ammunition. In this regard, bilateral agreements have been signed between South Africa and Mozambique and between South Africa and Swaziland to address cross-border crime. These agreements led to the launching of the first joint operation, known as Operation Rachel, for the collection and destruction of uncontrolled arms and explosives caches within Mozambique. Four Rachel operations have been launched within Mozambique since 1995, to locate and destroy uncontrolled arms and explosive caches in Mozambique. Huge successes have been achieved in which several tons of arms and explosives have been destroyed.

While international arms control and disarmament initiatives have so far mainly focused on weapons of mass destruction and major categories of conventional arms, the devastation inflicted by the indiscriminate use of small arms and light weapons, especially on the reconstruction of post-conflict societies, can and should no longer be ignored. To this end, the Security Council should play a leading role.

The President: I thank the representative of South Africa for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Bangladesh. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Chowdhury (Bangladesh): At the outset, Sir, allow me to convey my warm greetings to you, a dear colleague and a capable representative of your great country. Let me take this opportunity also to convey, through you, to the Foreign Minister of Malaysia our cordial welcome and thanks for the benefit of his guidance at this morning's session.

Bangladesh commends the initiative of the Security Council and its President, Malaysia, for convening this meeting. This gives the States Members of the United Nations an opportunity to come up with ideas on how

best the cause of international peace and security can be served and also on how best the issue of post-conflict peace-building — in particular its disarmament, demobilization and reintegration aspects — can be addressed. Our deliberations will, hopefully, help identify areas that are of interest to the United Nations and the international community.

Bangladesh would like to convey its special appreciation to the Deputy Secretary-General for her very pertinent statement at the start of our debate earlier today. The five points which she identified for the Council's particular attention are extremely important and her views are shared by my delegation.

The international situation today remains fluid. A climate of uncertainty persists. Commitments made in some major areas of international cooperation remain to be fulfilled. The gap between the developed and developing countries, particularly the least developed countries, continues to widen. The problems that derive from poverty and social injustices are in many instances being compounded. Lack of development, poverty and social injustice constitute a deep source of frustration and even a possible cause of new conflicts, with easily available ex-combatants to re-enter situations of violence. The consolidation of peace, security and democracy on a global scale will require a reversal of growing international inequalities. Disputes among nations and within nations, violent conflicts, aggression, foreign occupation and interference in the internal affairs of States continue to frustrate the object of peaceful coexistence of States and peoples.

As we look at the nature of conflicts and social strife that many parts of the world are experiencing today, we notice that inter-State wars and foreign occupation have been on the decline since the end of the cold war. However, intra-State conflicts, social strife, deprivation, abuses of human rights, ethnic aggrandizement and xenophobia continue to pose problems that result in violence and impinge on international peace and security.

In wars and conflicts of today, parties involved quite often take recourse to actions which constitute flagrant violations of human rights and international law, particularly humanitarian laws. The weaker and vulnerable groups of society become easy and innocent victims of conflicts. Abuses of the rights of women and children are most common.

We believe that international peace and security can best be strengthened not by actions of States alone, but by men and women through the inculcation of a culture of peace and non-violence in every human being and in every sphere of activity. The elements of a culture of peace draw from age-old principles and values which are respected and held in high esteem by all peoples and societies. The objective of a culture of peace is the empowerment of people. It contributes effectively to the overcoming of authoritarian structures and accompanying exploitation through democratic participation. It works against poverty and inequality and promotes development. It celebrates diversity and advances understanding and tolerance. We regard the culture of peace as an effective expedient to minimize and prevent violence and conflict in the present-day world and effectively contribute to the building and strengthening of peace in post-conflict situations.

The maintenance and consolidation of peace and security depend in large measure on favourable conditions for durable peace after a conflict. The transition from peacekeeping to peace-building obviously needs the close attention of the international community. Such a transition, if not properly managed, can seriously undermine every positive peacemaking effort. In fact, we have witnessed societies emerging from a conflict situation to indulge in fresh intra-State or intra-group conflicts. This is an aspect of peace and security and peace-building that cannot be overemphasized.

After a war or conflict, the maintenance of peace and security in a country or a region cannot be ensured in an environment of poverty, hunger and ignorance, economic deprivation and lack of accountability in the use of political power. In a post-conflict situation, the ground remains fertile for the outbreak of fresh conflicts on minor issues or no pretext as armed combatants, who are in most cases not a disciplined force, are prone to involve themselves in conflicts at slight instigation. In a situation like this, the disarmament and reintegration of ex-combatants are essential. However, the ex-combatants should be integrated into the mainstream of society in a way which enables them to get involved in the peace process and contribute to normalizing the situation. In this regard, our experience has been quite positive.

In Bangladesh, the Government negotiated an end to a long-standing problem in the Chittagong Hill Tracts in December 1997 with the signing of a peace accord which met the legitimate concerns of the population of that area. Following the signing of the accord, the ex-combatants

disarmed themselves by surrendering their arms to the Government. They are being successfully integrated into society, in particular in the development activities of the area through administrative councils headed by their leaders.

Let me reiterate in conclusion that Bangladesh is committed to the cause of international peace and security. We have been a major contributor to the peacekeeping and peacemaking efforts of the United Nations and are prepared to work constructively with the Member States in the promotion of the objectives of the United Nations Charter.

The President: I thank the representative of Bangladesh for his kind words addressed to me, my delegation and my Foreign Minister.

The next speaker is the representative of the Republic of Korea. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Lee (Republic of Korea): Allow me to express our warm congratulations and appreciation to you, Mr. President, for having taken the initiative of organizing today's open debate on the important issues of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants in the context of peacekeeping. My delegation welcomes today's meeting as another step forward towards more transparency in the Council's proceedings and also as a timely effort to build on the previous debate of the Council on post-conflict peace-building, held last December.

Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration are essential in breaking the cycle of violence and in building lasting peace in conflict areas. We believe that these three elements should be addressed in their entirety and as an integral part of a continuum of peacekeeping and post-conflict peace-building activities. Let me highlight the following points to which my Government attaches particular importance.

First of all, our recent experience shows that disarmament, demobilization and reintegration cannot succeed without genuine political cooperation among all the actors involved, including peacekeepers, international mediators and parties to the conflict. Disarmament efforts made by the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM) in 1993 and by the United Nations Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium (UNTAES) in 1996 respectively, are cases in point. In our view, opposite results in these two examples were mainly due to differing levels of political commitment on the part of warring parties. My delegation therefore considers that any final political settlement to a conflict should include an agreement on specific measures of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, and that peacekeepers who carry out such measures should be equipped with the explicit mandate of the Security Council, supported by adequate resources. In this regard, we welcome Security Council resolutions 1208 (1998) and 1209 (1998) adopted last year on African refugee and arms flow problems. These resolutions reflect the importance the Security Council attaches to disarmament, demobilization and reintegration measures in its work. We hope that the Security Council will continue to pay great attention to this issue.

Secondly, my delegation believes that appropriate incentives should be devised to encourage ex-combatants to disarm and demobilize voluntarily. The nature and type of the incentive system should vary depending upon different contexts of conflict situations. Priority should be given to helping disarmed ex-combatants to help themselves in the long term through vocational training and job creation. The international community should also provide affected communities with the necessary financial and technical assistance. With this in mind, my Government contributed $250,000 to programmes for the demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants in Angola, when we recently served on the Security Council. We also support a more active involvement of international financial institutions in these activities.

In this connection, the international community should pay more attention to the disturbing situation, as witnessed in the Great Lakes region of Africa, where increasing banditry and criminality are being perpetrated by armed ex-combatants. Many former combatants, including child soldiers, whom the Secretary-General has called armies of the losers, are still roaming the area and often threaten the security and civilian character of refugee camps in the region. The Security Council should urgently address this particular problem, as such a situation poses a potential threat to regional peace and stability.

Thirdly, my delegation notes with appreciation the significant achievements in this area made since 1997 by our colleagues in the group of interested States on practical disarmament measures. We welcome the guidelines on conventional arms control/limitation and disarmament recently adopted by the Disarmament Commission. These guidelines, we hope, will be

extensively applied as a framework for the effective implementation of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration activities.

My delegation steadfastly holds the view that a regional or subregional approach should be explored to stem the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons. In this connection, we commend the efforts made respectively by the European Union, through the recent adoption of its joint action, and by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) through the declaration of a moratorium on the importation, exportation and manufacture of light weapons in West Africa. We hope that similar initiatives can be taken in other regions as well.

Before concluding, my delegation notes with satisfaction two successful projects in this field conducted with the assistance of members of the group of interested States. A workshop held in Guatemala City last November is one case in point, where the experiences of Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua and Colombia in weapons collection and integration of former combatants were discussed. We hope that the lessons learned from the experiences of those countries will be fully shared with other countries affected by civil strife. Another case in point is the pilot weapons collection project in the Albanian district of Gramsh launched last January. The innovative idea of providing development assistance as a reward for the voluntary surrender of weapons and ammunition from the local population deserves further study.

Today's open debate provides us with a valuable opportunity to increase common awareness of this important issue. We heard today a number of constructive suggestions made by both members and non-members of the Security Council. We hope that they will help the Council and the United Nations system as a whole to better address this important issue and to take further action as necessary.

The President: I thank the representative of the Republic of Korea for the kind words he addressed to me and my delegation.

The next speaker is the representative of Japan. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Yamazaki (Japan): I would like to begin by extending my sincere congratulations to you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of July. I am confident that with the benefit of your wise leadership the Council's consideration of today's agenda item — disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants in a peacekeeping environment — will be most fruitful. The Government of Japan welcomes the timely decision of the Security Council to focus specifically on this issue, and appreciates the initiative of Malaysia that resulted in the convening of today's meeting.

As the body with primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, the Security Council has, since the end of the cold war, often been called upon to respond to regional conflicts by launching a peacekeeping operation. Experience has taught us that in responding to regional conflicts, it is necessary to address the fragile post-conflict environment in all its aspects. The success of these operations is to a great extent dependent upon the smooth implementation of measures aimed at the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants. Indeed, it may be said that the ultimate objective of such a comprehensive approach is the disarming, demobilization, and reintegration of ex-combatants.

Today I would like to touch upon the question of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration in terms of the following five aspects.

First, it is important to consider disarmament, demobilization and reintegration in a coordinated and consistent manner. Until now, different aspects of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration have been addressed in various forums. The issue of small arms, for instance, has been discussed in the General Assembly and other forums. The Government of Japan has taken several initiatives with a view to coordinating those various efforts. It also sponsored General Assembly resolution 50/70 B which asked the Secretary-General to establish a group of governmental experts on small arms. Ambassador Mitsuro Donowaki, Special Assistant to the Foreign Minister of Japan, serves as the Chairman of that Group. In addition, and supplementing the work of the expert group, Japan hosted the Tokyo Workshop on Small Arms, to which it invited experts from the Group, as well as delegations from interested States, the Department for Disarmament Affairs and non-governmental organizations.

Secondly, illicit arms transfers to and within a region should be controlled in order to prevent the resumption of hostilities. Since this is a task that requires the full cooperation of the international community, the

General Assembly at its fifty-third session adopted resolution 77 E, requesting the Secretary-General to submit his recommendations to the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session in preparation for an international conference on the illicit arms trade in all its aspects, to be held not later than the year 2001. The success of that conference is eagerly anticipated by the Group of Governmental Experts on Small Arms. In this context, during its presidency of the Security Council last year, Japan coordinated the efforts of the working group on illicit arms flows to and in Africa, whose results were reflected in Security Council resolution 1209 (1998). We sincerely hope that these efforts will be effectively utilized in preparing for the 2001 United Nations conference on arms flows.

The third point, and one whose importance to sustainable peace cannot be overstated, is that of development. Recognizing that one of the causes of social instability is often extreme poverty, Japan hosted the First and Second Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD), in 1993 and 1998, respectively. It is hoped that the TICAD process will underscore the importance of conflict prevention and post-conflict reconstruction in restoring stability throughout society, which is a prerequisite for development.

The fourth point to bear in mind when addressing the issue of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration is the importance of coordination among international organizations and non-governmental organizations. Inasmuch as disarmament, demobilization and reintegration is a comparatively new area of endeavour for the United Nations and its related bodies, the input and cooperation of interested States and non-governmental organizations are especially important. In this connection, Japan held an open symposium to stress the importance of cooperation among international organizations and non-governmental organizations under the theme of civil society and small arms on the occasion of the Tokyo Workshop on Small Arms.

Fifthly, it is important to establish an institutional memory so that past experience will be utilized to ensure the maximum effectiveness of future peacekeeping operations. Towards this end, the Government of Japan funded a study on lessons learned from disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, and a workshop in Geneva held by the Lessons Learned Unit. Through these and other studies, we hope to devise a strategy for implementing principles and guidelines for future peacekeeping operations which will have a major bearing on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration.

In concluding, let me reiterate the point that individual disarmament, demobilization and reintegration measures, such as those I have just mentioned, while important in themselves, must also be undertaken as part of a comprehensive approach to post-conflict peacekeeping and peace-building. I sincerely hope that this important subject will continue to be addressed by the United Nations as a whole. The Government of Japan, for its part, will continue to make every possible effort to contribute to that endeavour.

The President: I thank the representative of Japan for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Mozambique. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Santos (Mozambique): I would like to join previous speakers in congratulating you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council and on the excellent manner in which you are conducting the affairs of the Council. Allow me also to pay a special tribute to your predecessor, Ambassador Jagne of the Gambia, for the excellent work he did during the difficult month of June.

I would also like to express our appreciation to the Deputy Secretary-General for her statement and for her presence here today.

We commend your initiative, Mr. President, in introducing today's topic to the agenda of the Council. We salute members of the Council for agreeing to give this issue the priority it deserves. Indeed, not only is the theme of the maintenance of peace and security and post-conflict peace-building and the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants in a peacekeeping environment relevant and timely, but it also, and perhaps more important, falls under the core competency of the Security Council.

We therefore welcome the opportunity to share our views and lend our modest contribution to the debate, in the hope that this body will play a more effective role in the maintenance of international peace and security.

Recent experience reminds us that the maintenance of international peace and security in post-conflict situations requires the timely adoption and implementation of adequate measures to consolidate peace and prevent the re-emergence of conflict. In this regard,

disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants should be given the highest priority for, without them, peace will be in constant jeopardy.

Mozambique is today considered a success story in United Nations peacekeeping history. While we take great pride in the achievements made by the Mozambican people with the invaluable assistance of the international community, we are conscious of the challenges that lie ahead in our war-torn society.

The 1992 General Peace Agreement for Mozambique, signed in Rome, provided for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. Indeed, mechanisms were set up to deal with these delicate areas. As a result, the cantonment of combatants and their disarmament and demobilization was carried out without major incident. The Reintegration Commission provided for under the Peace Agreement had the mandate to deal with the immediate needs of the combatants. Clearly, providing combatants with cash payments for a few months following the cessation of hostilities will not suffice. They need continued assistance and they need to be empowered to generate their own means survival and to lead normal lives as working people so that going back to war will no longer be a viable option. The inclusion of these provisions and mechanisms in the Peace Agreement had a very positive impact in the consolidation of peace in Mozambique.

My Government has spared no effort to address the problem of the reintegration of former combatants, including those who fought for the independence of the country. As Ambassador Greenstock mentioned this morning, different strategies were experimented with, ranging from vocational training to job placement and self-employment. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has supported those efforts by the Government and has studied the impact those programmes. Support from cooperating partners has been vital in this process.

Reintegration means also reconciling combatants with communities that were victim of atrocities. Thus it requires the participation of communities and civil-society organizations in the process. And reintegration has to be such that former combatants will identify more with the community than with their former roles as fighters. At some point they should cease to be considered a special group of citizens, but rather be part of the communities they live in.

Of particular importance in this regard is the delicate issue of the demobilization and reintegration of child soldiers. While Governments can be held accountable for the use of children as soldiers it is often difficult to induce change in rebel groups and to have them admit that they make use of children. The magnitude of the problem cannot be overemphasized. In the African continent alone, about 120,000 children under 18 years of age are currently participating in armed conflicts.

Therefore, there is a need to recognize and highlight the specific difficulties encountered when disarming, demobilizing and reintegrating child soldiers. Traumatized children will find it difficult to reintegrate into their communities or even into new communities. They need long-term measures emphasizing education, family reunification and psycho-social support. The United Nations Children's Fund has gathered experience in this field and can assist in developing guiding principles for action. The Graça Machel study, documents A/51/306 and A/51/306/Add.1, offers useful recommendations in this regard. The follow-up actions by the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict, Olara Otunnu, are equally relevant, and the briefs given to the Council by Ambassador Otunnu should be continued and be more action-oriented.

One important aspect to be taken into account is the total disarmament of combatants: making sure that all weapons are handed over. Seven years after the General Peace Agreement, the Mozambican authorities, in coordination with neighbouring South Africa, have been discovering caches of weapons that were supposed to have been handed over at the time of demobilization. Therefore, provisions in agreements will not be sufficient; close monitoring of the process will be required in the mandate of peacekeeping missions.

The presence of large numbers of small weapons in unlawful hands will remain a constant danger to peace and stability in post-conflict areas. Regional and international efforts under way in this area should be strengthened and expedited. Practical disarmament measures should be pursued whenever and wherever possible. The Panel of Governmental Experts on Small Arms, of which I am privileged to be a part, has produced valuable recommendations and is currently discussing their implementation and updating. The subsequent reports by the Secretary-General should merit due consideration by the Security Council.

The first meeting of States parties to the Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling,

Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, held in Maputo, Mozambique only two months ago, once again highlighted the impact of landmines in post-conflict areas. While this problem cannot be completely solved by peacekeeping missions, mission mandates should include provisions for assisting local authorities in building the necessary capacities to deal with the different aspects of the problem, including mine awareness, victim assistance, stockpile destruction and technology for mine action.

The United Nations has accumulated a wealth of experience, and important lessons can be learned. We should therefore use our innovative capacity to develop concrete guidelines and a framework for action in future peacekeeping operations. The usefulness of today's debate will be judged to large extent by the level of improvements that the Security Council will be able to introduce. The resources committed to peacekeeping operations and to post-conflict peace-building also reflect the level of commitment to finding durable solutions.

We recognize that solutions to these problems lie primarily in the willingness of the parties to participate and in the political will to reach a positive conclusion. But, as the experience in Mozambique and elsewhere has shown, this readiness has to be backed by the international community if it is to last. And the end of a peacekeeping operation should not mean the end of international community support.

An integrated approach to these issues will certainly be required so that post-conflict peace-building can lead to lasting peace and stability. The entire United Nations system is called upon to play a role in devising the most effective strategies that will ensure future success. The expectations are high, and the Security Council bears great responsibility as provided in the Charter of the United Nations.

We look forward to the outcome of this meeting and to the deliberations and actions that will follow.

The President: I thank the representative of Mozambique for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Australia. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Smith (Australia): Australia welcomes the opportunity to participate in an open debate in the Security Council on this important issue. We congratulate you, Sir, and the delegation of Malaysia on this initiative.

We would like to make some observations about the challenges created by the problem of regions emerging from conflict, drawing on Australia's own practical experience in the aftermath of the conflict on the island of Bougainville. Many of these observations serve to illustrate the conclusions and observations in the informal paper prepared for this debate. They are themes that have been cited by other speakers today.

Our experience supports the obvious conclusion that there are no simple solutions to the problems posed by former combatants. The challenges are multifaceted and involve a range of economic, social, educational, judicial and disarmament issues — all of which must be addressed in an integrated, coordinated way. They include the need for effective demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants into productive civilian life; post-conflict reconstruction and reconciliation in stable and secure environments; reform and capacity-building of police, judicial and penal systems; and promotion of respect for international humanitarian law, including with regard to the use and transfer of small arms.

In the case of Bougainville, the first real challenge facing local leaders has been to re-establish civil society and a viable local economy. Working with Bougainvilleans and the Papua New Guinea Government, Australia has been pleased to be able to help address both the immediate and the long-term needs of ex-combatants. Rehabilitating social services, restoring much-needed employment opportunities and addressing unresolved social issues of weapons disposal, alcohol abuse, family violence and ongoing trauma are examples of areas where initiatives are being taken.

Peace on Bougainville has allowed the re-emergence of a fledgling local economy and some early employment opportunities. These must continue to be nurtured and expanded. The Australian Government, through its international aid agency, encourages the participation and employment of local Bougainvilleans, including ex-combatants, in its aid projects. More than 4,000 people have been employed to date, and this number will increase as projects get under way to rehabilitate Bougainville's road and bridge infrastructure and its once highly productive agriculture sector, and to re-establish services in health and education.

To date, the absence of a highly skilled workforce has usually limited the employment of local people to manual labouring. Many of the young ex-combatants in particular have received very little education and training. In recognition of this, priority is being given to the rebuilding of education facilities in Bougainville. Two major high schools are being rebuilt, and the construction of Bougainville's only vocational training centre has just been completed. Working alongside Bougainville communities, the Australian Government has also rebuilt some 30 double classrooms for village schools.

Many ex-combatants are severely traumatized by their experience during years of armed conflict. This challenge is also being addressed through collaborative efforts. We have encouraged and funded the work of local non-governmental organizations to train trauma counsellors, encourage the reintegration of ex-combatants and deal with ongoing social problems.

We are also working closely with the New Zealand and Papua New Guinea Governments to develop a policing project, which will ultimately see 200 Bougainvilleans trained as community police. Some 30 local men and women have already benefitted from an earlier project to train them as community police. A number of the beneficiaries are unemployed Bougainvillean youth. This is an important measure. In the absence of civil authority, a number of local law-and-order bodies have emerged with former rebels and local chiefs. In some instances, this has led to summary justice and an approach to law and order that is subject to no constitutional or legal control.

The presence of the Peace Monitoring Group, a multinational force led by Australia and comprising approximately 300 personnel from Australia, Fiji, New Zealand and Vanuatu, working cooperatively with the United Nations Political Office in Bougainville (UNPOB) have both been crucial in managing the problem of disenfranchised combatants. The Peace Monitoring Group and UNPOB are both neutral, unarmed bodies mandated to monitor the peace and report to the parties. Their collective presence has provided a critical climate of security for Bougainvilleans, and has instilled in them the confidence to work through their differences. Without their presence, the threat to the Bougainville peace process posed by large numbers of ex-combatants would certainly have been more serious.

The United Nations Political Office is also playing an important role in weapons disposal on the island. This is a key issue in the debate on Bougainville's political future. In early June 1999, the Peace Process Consultative Committee, a forum chaired by UNPOB and through which the parties can discuss peace-process-related issues and make recommendations to leaders, authorized UNPOB to develop a plan for weapons disposal, in conjunction with the key parties. The parties' agreement to such a plan will not only be significant in terms of reducing the number of weapons on the island and their threat to the peace process, but will also be a very important confidence-building measure in the context of negotiations over Bougainville's political future.

I will conclude with a brief comment on the problem of small arms. Demobilization, weapons disposal and peace-monitoring programmes, such as those in which we have been involved in Bougainville, can and do play a key role in managing the problems caused in many other parts of the world by the proliferation and misuse of small arms. The small arms problem is a complex one, covering many issues: disarmament, human rights, legal, good governance and law and order issues, among others. But an effective response can come over time through enhanced national and regional responses, which in turn can serve as building blocks for an effective international response. This approach has helped guide the Australian Government in the development of its own policy on the small arms issue.

We offer these observations in the hope that they contribute in a practical way to this important debate. These are complex issues and clearly they do warrant further study, particularly with a focus on how our objectives can practically be built in to United Nations peacekeeping, post-conflict peace-building and post-conflict reconstruction activities. In this context, we welcome the proposal for further work on the issue assisted by a report from the Secretary-General.

The President: I thank the representative of Australia for his kind words addressed to me and my delegation.

The next speaker is the representative of Indonesia. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Effendi (Indonesia): At the outset, my delegation would like to extend its sincere congratulations to you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of July. We have every confidence that, under your wise and able guidance, the issues before the Council will be brought to a successful

conclusion. Allow me also to extend felicitations to your predecessor, Ambassador Jagne, the Permanent Representative of the Gambia, for his skilful stewardship of the Council's activities last month.

Mr. President, my delegation wishes to commend your delegation for its excellent initiative on considering in the Security Council the issue of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants. We believe that it is timely and that it will be beneficial to the international community.

The role of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants is admittedly not only complex for the parties involved; it is also complex because of its international ramifications. It calls for the factions concerned to agree to the terms of a peace agreement and to give up the use of force, which is essential for the successful launching of this three-pronged approach which, as experience has shown, is interrelated and mutually reinforcing. Meanwhile, the international dimensions of these activities must focus on the role of the United Nations and of regional organizations in their respective spheres of competence. Their involvement at various stages of these complex operations has had a salutary impact in bringing a measure of stability, which has eventually led in some instances to the restoration of normalcy in troubled areas.

Moreover, the handing over of weapons to competent authorities and the ensuing demobilization have positive implications for security in post-conflict situations, especially in ensuring and advancing the peace process. We all recognize that in endeavours to create an atmosphere conducive to security, it will be necessary to disarm combatants and to collect armaments from civilians within the framework of an overall weapons-collection programme in order to promote an environment where weapons are no longer perceived as necessary.

A further step that must be taken is to address the question of adequate financing, which is a sina qua non for ensuring the implementation of comprehensive programmes of reintegration and the reconstruction of the damaged economy. The distribution of financial assistance on a fair basis between the ex-combatants and the general population, many of whom also face extreme economic hardship, will in turn prevent another conflict caused by the disgruntled parties.

In this context, it is important to note that during the brief period of only two years, from 1995 to 1997, 300,000 children under the age of 18 were used as soldiers in conflicts around the world. Their future is at stake, especially when adequate opportunities in education to prepare them for careers and counselling to overcome the trauma of hostilities are limited. It is self-evident that more needs to be done to alleviate their suffering and to ensure them a rightful place in their societies through adequate support programmes.

Another important issue to confront is the problem of curbing the flow of arms through clandestine means after disarmament is achieved, as they will have a profoundly negative impact on security and portend a potentially explosive situation, leading ultimately to destabilization. This calls for determined and coordinated efforts at the national, regional and global levels to curb illicit transfers of arms. The need to accommodate approaches in response to changes is also a welcome step. At the same time, care should be taken to conform to the basic principles enshrined in the Charter.

By way of concluding, Sir, I wish to reiterate my delegation's appreciation for your excellent initiative on this matter, which is very important to the international community.

The President: I thank the representative of Indonesia for his kind words addressed to me and my delegation.

The next speaker is the representative of New Zealand. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Hughes (New Zealand): May I start, Mr. President, by saying how pleased my delegation is to have this opportunity to participate in an open debate of the Security Council on this very important topic. I would like to congratulate you on your initiative in calling this meeting.

We have prepared our statement today drawing largely on our national experience in United Nations peacekeeping operations, such as the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) and the United Nations Operation in Mozambique (ONUMOZ). I must say that I found the statement made earlier by the representative of Mozambique particularly valuable. We have also drawn from our participation in regional arrangements, such as the Peace Monitoring Group in Bougainville, Papua New Guinea, where the United Nations is also playing a key role in the peace process

through its Political Office (UNPOB), and which was, of course, the subject of my Australian colleague's statement earlier.

It seems to us that, in designing a framework for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants, three factors are essential. These are flexibility, building capacity and sustainability.

With respect to flexibility, we suggest it is essential to recognize that different circumstances warrant and should be accorded different approaches. For instance, where a society has been severely disrupted by civil war or ethnic conflict to the point that its domestic institutions have collapsed, the role of the United Nations and other external agencies is likely to need to be extensive. In other situations, however, where an established and internationally recognized Government remains in place after a period of conflict, the role of outsiders, including the United Nations, is likely to be more limited. A rigid conceptual framework should therefore be avoided.

As for building capacity, there is the need to provide, at the level of the individual, education, training and information regarding options which may be available to ex-combatants to help them deal with problems encountered on demobilization. At the national level, it should be an overriding concern to develop as soon as possible a national capability in demobilization and reintegration activities so as to reduce dependence on external inputs.

Sustainability, of course, implies that initiatives are designed with a view to avoiding a return to conflict. It also means promoting growth and development over the medium to long term and ensuring equitable access to the benefits of such growth.

The successful implementation of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants in a peacekeeping environment depends a good deal on the provisions made in the agreement ending the conflict in question, as a number of others have pointed out today. Activities in support of these processes should, as far as possible, be carefully planned and designed from the very beginning. In particular, this means early consultation with the parties to the conflict. As for external resources, we can only agree with the observation made by several speakers today that it is essential that our collective peacekeeping efforts enjoy a more secure financial basis than exists at present.

One of the key lessons learned from New Zealand's experience in Bougainville, Papua New Guinea, is the need to give ownership of the peace settlement and subsequent disarmament and reconstruction mechanisms to the parties concerned. Along with Australia, Fiji and Vanuatu, we continue to provide personnel to the Peace Monitoring Group and to take part in regular peace process consultative meetings. However, our own role is essentially peripheral to that played by the political leaders themselves.

Reintegration nevertheless remains a complex and expensive activity. It is particularly difficult to implement successfully in economies which are stagnant or severely disrupted as a result of conflict. Ideally, emphasis should also be placed on programmes which promote reconciliation at the same time, for example, by recruiting former combatants to work side by side in a new police force, where this is feasible.

In regard to Bougainville, New Zealand is continuing to provide, by means of official development assistance, support for the peace process, including the restoration of civil authority and a variety of vocational training programmes with a focus on reintegration. It is pleasing to report that we have found it possible to offer training programmes in which former protagonists learn side by side.

A further essential building block is the promotion of good governance. We are attracted to the definition set out by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) that good governance is

> "the exercise of economic, political and administrative authority to manage a country's affairs at all levels in a manner that is participatory, transparent and accountable".

Good governance, in effect, means that priorities are based on a broad consensus in society, while at the same time the voices of the poorest and most vulnerable are heard.

Finally, we believe it is useful to recall the words of former Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali when he wrote in *An Agenda for Peace* that

> "Preventative diplomacy is to avoid a crisis; post-conflict peace-building is to prevent a recurrence". [A/47/277, para. 57]

This concise statement captures very well the need to take adequate steps to deal with problems which, if left unresolved, could lead to a return to armed conflict. It also underlines clearly the need for due weight to be given to the reintegration aspect of the tripartite topic we are discussing today. For, without a successful reintegration effort, the dividends of disarmament and demobilization may prove short-lived.

The President: I thank the representative of New Zealand for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Croatia. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Šimonović (Croatia): I welcome the opportunity to greet you, Sir, as the President of the Security Council for the month of July. Your initiative, which led to today's open debate on the centrality of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants to the restoration of stability and sustainable peace, represents a natural extension of Malaysia's extensive record in the fields of international peacekeeping and peace-building. As a country with direct recent experience in matters that we are discussing today, we wish to make a specific contribution concerning elements that might be incorporated into future planning and execution of United Nations-led operations and missions of the regional security organizations.

It is our pleasure to participate in the debate and share our views on a comprehensive approach to the questions of peacekeeping and peace-building. We are aware that different requirements embedded in military management and bureaucratic governance in United Nations missions call for distinct categories and tasks of peacekeeping and peace-building efforts. Nevertheless, all of these efforts comprise the same continuum on the road towards a lasting peace.

The objective of restoring and maintaining a lasting peace should not fall victim to conceptual or bureaucratic compartmentalization, its value being too large and its opposite too costly. If the Security Council indeed wishes to enhance the effectiveness, scope and reach of its Charter-mandated responsibility to maintain international peace and security, it should not shy away from improving upon old or searching for new means to fit new realities in a comprehensive manner.

In this regard, Croatia salutes the initiative to move away from a piecemeal approach to what it takes in today's world and age to enhance the prospects for sustainable peace. The quest for developing general principles and guidelines for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants in a peacekeeping and peace-building environment is timely, and fully consistent with existing efforts of the Secretary-General. It is also consistent with the political will of a number of Member States, as evidenced best by today's turnout of speakers.

Having hosted five distinct United Nations peacekeeping operations in the last eight years, Croatia has gained experience that entitles it to reflect upon the lessons learned in peacekeeping and peace-building. On this occasion, I will not comment on those operations on Croatia's soil that did not succeed. Rather, I wish to elaborate briefly on three points from the lessons learned from the successful United Nations Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium (UNTAES). Those three points are: a pioneering model of disarmament that was used in the Croatian Danubian region during the UNTAES mission; a follow-on security assistance and political mission that ensued upon the successful completion of the United Nations mission; and finally, national strategy and policy measures regarding rehabilitation and reintegration of former combatants.

UNTAES was created in an environment favourable to its ultimate goal of peaceful reintegration of the formerly occupied Croatian territory: we had the agreement of the parties to the conflict; recourse to the military option was unattractive to all interested parties; and the political goal of peaceful reintegration was clearly set and known, as well as supported by the political will of the host Government, the international community and the skilled United Nations leadership in the field. And yet, the process of reintegration was, of course, more than politically challenging. It represented major technical and bureaucratic difficulties for civilian aspects of reintegration.

Critical to the orderly implementation of the civilian timetable of reintegration, however, was the process of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants. Importantly, this process was launched not only early on in the operation, but also, was completed swiftly and competently in an innovative manner of a weapons buy-back scheme. The firearms buy-back programme lasted approximately ten months, and was jointly conducted by the Croatian Government and

UNTAES. Under the programme, significant amounts of firearms, explosive ammunition and ignition devices were collected, for which approximately $1.6 million were paid. Since, the process of voluntary return and collection of small arms has continued, beginning in August, any further illegal possession of arms will be penalized.

The UNTAES operation was concluded on schedule on 15 January 1998. During the last few months, the number of peacekeepers was scaled down substantially. As the transition period proceeded, an increasing number of security functions were performed by the Transitional Police Force (TPF), which was made up of 40 per cent each of Croats and Serbs and 20 per cent of other ethnic groups present in the region. Importantly, the international community provided training assistance for a number of TPF members, which proved crucial to establishing a high level of professionalism. This was invaluable to proper reintegration of former combatants and maintenance of law and order. Initially under the responsibility of UNTAES, the TPF later came under the management of the Ministry of the Interior one year prior to complete reintegration of the region.

The nine-month follow-on United Nations support group, by monitoring civilian police practices, added its weight to the positive momentum for a normalization of life in the area. Not necessarily enchanted, but fully cognizant of the magnitude and complexity of the ongoing process of reintegration, Croatia later invited the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) to continue with certain monitoring duties in Eastern Slavonia. In doing so, Croatia has recognized the need to do what it takes to consolidate stability and sustain peace, and thereby help the local population move on towards joint tasks of rebuilding prosperity. In this regard, as was recently emphasized during the Zagreb regional conference on anti-personnel landmines, demining remains a priority task.

In the interest of speeding up reconciliation and overall post-conflict recovery, special importance should be attached to economic and social measures. In this respect, reintegration of ex-combatants into civil society carries additional weight. In Croatia, we tried to stimulate this reintegration in several ways, including by adopting an amnesty law that exonerated former rebels, except for the perpetrators of war crimes. Veterans are given priority in access to higher education and to employment in the public sector. They are also eligible for preferential lines of credit for new business ventures or agricultural leases. For those who cannot be included in the active working population, special unemployment benefits, including health care, as well as early retirement benefits, are also available.

Needless to say, all of these policy measures have proven expensive. They are taxing on the national budget of an economy burdened with reconstruction, low investment and real growth rates and high unemployment, as is always the case in a post-conflict society. This is why Croatia strongly recommends that, as a part of the international financial assistance provided to post-conflict societies, special funds be earmarked for, and allocated to, specific programmes that support rehabilitation and reintegration of former combatants.

As we have stated before in this and other forums, reconciliation does not take place overnight, but represents a long-term process. In this regard, I cannot over-emphasize the importance of establishing the truth about what happened during the conflict, that is, the establishment of responsibility for war crimes that have been committed. The goal of reintegration of former combatants cannot be attained without this element of justice. The alternative, if war criminals are not brought to justice, is that a neighbour will not trust a neighbour walking down the street after sunset, let alone join hands in rebuilding and developing a livelihood in the same community.

The President: I thank the representative of Croatia for the kind words he addressed to me and my delegation.

The next speaker is the representative of El Salvador. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Meléndez-Barahona (El Salvador) (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the delegation of El Salvador, may I first of all convey to you, Sir, our congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of July, and on joining your Minister for Foreign Affairs in presiding over this meeting. We welcome this good initiative to consider the question of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants in a peacekeeping environment.

On 16 January 1992, a new phase began in the political history of El Salvador: the Government of El Salvador and the Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberacion Nacional (FMLN), under the auspices of the United Nations, signed the Peace Agreement in Chapultepec, Mexico, putting an end to armed conflict.

Commitments were entered into to bring about peace and national reconciliation, to foster democratization and observance of human rights, and to start a programme of reconstruction and economic and social development so as to eliminate the root causes that gave rise to internal conflict and avoid its repetition.

In order for us to draw lessons from my country's experience, allow me first of all to make a few comments about the peace process in El Salvador. The end of the cold war, the disintegration of the Soviet Union and progress in subregional détente were external factors that bolstered the peace process in El Salvador, which had long remained stagnant and without major progress.

The rejection of a continuation of the war by the majority of the political forces in El Salvador; the conviction of the parties to the conflict that none of them could defeat the other militarily and that an armed struggle would not resolve the serious and profound national problems; and the lack of confidence and of a belief that the parties to the conflict could reach agreement directly: these opened up the way for the Government of El Salvador and the FMLN separately to seek the assistance of the Secretary-General to help them carry out uninterrupted negotiations to resolve the conflict. From that time, the Organization began to play a proactive, dynamic and catalytic role in the peace process in El Salvador.

From the signing in 1990 of the Geneva Agreement, which set out general objectives, until the signing in 1992 of the Chapultepec Agreement, the United Nations played a key role in the entire negotiating process, doing its utmost to facilitate rapprochement and understanding between the parties, especially at times when disagreements developed that might otherwise have jeopardized the continuation of the process.

United Nations participation was not limited to contributing to the success of the negotiations, which gradually produced positive results and which led ultimately to partial agreements and to comprehensive agreements: the 1990 San José Agreement on Human Rights; the 1990 Caracas Agreement on the timetable and agenda for the negotiating process; the 1991 Mexico Agreement on substantive issues relating to the agenda; and the New York agreements of September and December 1991 and January 1992, when final agreements were entered into that subsequently shaped the peace agreement signed in Mexico in 1992. The United Nations also had to carry out the delicate task of international verification on the ground to ensure compliance with the agreed commitments.

It is important to note that before the final agreements were reached, and at the request of the Central American Presidents, in response to calls from the General Assembly and the Security Council, and at the request of the Secretary-General, interested parties outside the region undertook to support the peace process and to seek actively and constructively to attain a final solution to the armed conflict in El Salvador, including through supporting and assisting the implementation of the agreements entered into by the parties to the conflict. Significant examples of this support were the joint letter from the Secretary of State of the United States and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and the joint declaration issued by those two countries, both dated 1 August 1991, relating to the peace process and to cooperation by those countries in Central America. In addition to expressing firm support for the Secretary-General and for the active participation of the Friends of the Secretary-General aimed at achieving progress in that process, they urged countries outside the region, including Cuba, to step up their efforts to resolve the conflict in El Salvador through peaceful means.

The signing of the peace agreements marked a new and different stage in the process. With the authorization of the Security Council by resolution 693 (1991), the mandate of the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador was expanded. Initially, it had been established with a limited mandate aimed at ensuring active verification of compliance with the agreements on respect for and guarantees of human rights. In its expanded form, ONUSAL undertook a more complex, multidisciplinary operation, assuming responsibility for providing assistance and verifying the implementation of the Peace Agreement, which included, among other fundamental elements, a ceasefire, which was agreed upon even before the signing of the peace agreements; the separation of forces and the demobilization and destruction of FMLN weapons; the reduction and reform of the armed forces; constitutional reforms; the subordination of the armed forces to civilian authority; the elimination of the repressive forces and the creation of a new national civil police force; the legalization of the FMLN as a political party; the integration of ex-combatants into the political, economic and social life of the country; the reform of the judicial and electoral systems; and economic and social reform, including land-transfer programmes and programmes for the

reintegration of and financial support for ex-combatants. Mechanisms were also to foster national reconciliation, such as the Truth Commission, whose mandate was to shed light on the most relevant cases of human rights violations, the ad hoc committee responsible for purging the armed forces and the Peace Commission (COPAZ), which was responsible for safeguarding and ensuring compliance with commitments undertaken to promote assistance and community development, mainly in the agricultural sector.

In the economic and social sphere, it is important to mention that our national efforts were complemented by international cooperation through the establishment of a special economic cooperation plan for Central America adopted by the General Assembly and implemented and coordinated by the United Nations Development Programme with the cooperation of other specialized agencies of the system. A regional development programme for displaced persons, refugees and returnees (PRODERE) was also established, and this was active mainly in areas that were formerly involved in conflict. The programme was developed with the financial cooperation of the Government of Italy and with the coordinated participation of four specialized agencies: the United Nations Development Programme, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the International Labour Organization and the Pan American Health Organization of the World Health Organization.

I should also mention that, like the negotiating phase, the implementation of the commitments was not without its difficulties — difficulties that might even have jeopardized the fulfilment of the commitments. This was as much the result of the resistance of the armed forces to accepting change as it was to the violations of agreed obligations, and it was overcome through the intervention of ONUSAL and the political will and conviction of the parties, and their determination to achieve peace.

In this context, it is important to emphasize that the role of the United Nations was successful and effective because of the efficiency and professionalism with which the mandate of the Secretary-General and his staff was carried out. They acted impartially, respecting the positions and interests of the parties, and sought only to contribute to the achievement of a peaceful solution to the conflict in El Salvador.

On the basis of those considerations, we can learn certain lessons from El Salvador's experience. It is possible to establish cooperation between the world Organization and a small country to resolve complex and sensitive issues that, under certain circumstances, can go beyond national borders. The involvement of the United Nations came about through the sovereign decision of the Government of El Salvador and its acceptance by the FMLN. In other words, it was in keeping with the wishes of the parties to the conflict. The parties to the conflict expressed the necessary good faith and ensured that there was the political will to conduct negotiations until peace was achieved. The parties to the conflict accepted the active participation of the United Nations and undertook to cooperate and to comply with the commitments undertaken so as to consolidate peace. It is also important to emphasize that the political agrement reached between the parties on a firm and reliable basis was fundamental to guaranteeing the role of ONUSAL.

There was a delay in the time-frame for disarmament and demobilization because the parties did not mass their troops in the designated places; the Peace Agreement's provisions relating to the dissolution of the public security forces were not complied with; the reintegration of the ex-combatants was delayed; and there was incomplete information about the arms possessed by irregular forces. Both parties made mutual accusations which led to mistrust and delayed the implementation of the commitments. However, the determination to achieve peace made gradual progress possible in these areas, and the commitments were finally observed.

The process of reintegration of ex-combatants was slower, as it was directly related to a long-standing problem related to land tenure and the concentration of land ownership in El Salvador, and to the limited financial resources available to support the land-transfer programme and to provide financial and technical support. It was not possible to complete this programme during the mandate of United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador; it was completed during the period when the United Nations had a final, limited presence in El Salvador to verify compliance with outstanding sensitive elements of the peace accords. This was at the end of the former presidential Administration's mandate.

Verification of compliance with the human rights agreement involved an unprecedented role for the United Nations as, for the first time, such verification was being carried out in a sovereign State. It is also very important to note that the United Nations mandate was carried out impartially and objectively, as a result of which the parties had faith in the initiatives that the Organization, in its role as an intermediary, put forward.

International support was fundamental, particularly when the interested parties from outside the region undertook to support the peace process and to avoid taking any steps that might exacerbate the conflict. Cooperation and international financial assistance provided essential support for social development programmes to attack the root causes of the conflict. They complemented the political efforts aimed at achieving peace.

We believe that there was close coordination between the Government and the United Nations specialized agencies, which on principle had to include the international financial institutions, which are in a position to provide the necessary financial support for carrying out the reconstruction and national-development programmes that contribute to peace-building in post-conflict situations.

Finally, it is important to note that despite the complexity and the multidisciplinary nature of the operation in El Salvador, it is clear that once there is political will, and once there is agreement on a clear, precise framework of commitments, as well as a defined mandate that sets out the functions and scope of the Organization's role, the Organization is truly able to contribute to resolving a conflict, as took place in the case of El Salvador.

We think that the experience gained by the United Nations in various conflicts gives the Organization sufficient capability to draw up guidelines in this area.

The President: I thank the representative of El Salvador for his kind words addressed to me and for his kind reference to my Foreign Minister.

There are no further speakers on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 5.55 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.4021

Security Council

Fifty-fourth Year

Provisional

4021st Meeting
Thursday, 8 July 1999, 5.55 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Hasmy	(Malaysia)
Members:	Argentina	Mr. Petrella
	Bahrain	Mr. Al Dosari
	Brazil	Mr. Cordeiro
	Canada	Mr. Snell
	China	Mr. Chen Xu
	France	Mr. Teixeira da Silva
	Gabon	Mr. Dangue Réwaka
	Gambia	Mr. Touray
	Namibia	Mr. Andjaba
	Netherlands	Mr. van Walsum
	Russian Federation	Mr. Granovsky
	Slovenia	Mr. Türk
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Richmond
	United States of America	Mr. Burleigh

Agenda

Maintenance of peace and security and post-conflict peace-building

Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants in a peacekeeping environment

9985582 (E)

This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, *within one week of the date of publication*, to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178.

The meeting was called to order at 5.55 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Maintenance of peace and security and post-conflict peace-building

Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants in a peacekeeping environment

The President: The Security Council will now continue its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Following consultations among members of the Security Council, I have been authorized to make the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council recalls its primary responsibility under the Charter of the United Nations for the maintenance of international peace and security. The Council also recalls the statements made by its President in relation to activities of the United Nations in preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, peacekeeping and post-conflict peace-building.

"The Security Council has considered the matter of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants in a peacekeeping environment as part of its overall and continuing effort to contribute to enhancing the effectiveness of United Nations peacekeeping and peace-building activities in conflict situations around the world.

"The Security Council is seriously concerned that in a number of conflicts, armed fighting among various parties or factions continues despite the conclusion of peace agreements by warring parties and the presence of United Nations peacekeeping missions on the ground. It recognizes that a major contributory factor to such a situation has been the continued availability of large amounts of armaments, in particular small arms and light weapons, to conflicting parties. The Council emphasizes that, in order to achieve settlement, parties to a conflict must work towards the successful disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants, including child soldiers whose special needs should be seriously addressed.

"The Security Council recognizes that disarmament, demobilization and reintegration cannot be seen in isolation, but rather as a continuous process which is rooted in and feeds into a broader search for peace, stability and development. Effective disarmament of ex-combatants represents an important indicator of progress towards post-conflict peace-building and normalization of the situation. The demobilization effort is only possible when there is some level of disarmament and its success can only be achieved when there is effective rehabilitation and reintegration into society of ex-combatants. Disarmament and demobilization must take place in a secure and safe environment which will give ex-combatants the confidence to lay down their arms. Taking into account that the process is closely linked to economic and social issues, the question must be addressed comprehensively so as to facilitate a smooth transition from peacekeeping to peace-building.

"The Security Council emphasizes that for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration to be successful, there must be political will and a clear commitment by the parties concerned to achieve peace and stability. At the same time, it is vital that such commitments by the parties be reinforced by political will and consistent, effective and determined support from the international community to guarantee the achievement of sustainable peace, including through its contributions of long-term assistance for development and trade.

"The Security Council affirms its commitment to the principles of the political independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of all States in conducting peace-building activities, and the need for States to comply with their obligations under international law. Bearing this in mind, the Council stresses the need for the implementation, with the consent of the parties, of practical measures to promote the success of the process which, *inter alia*, may include the following:

"(a) The inclusion, as appropriate, within specific peace agreements and, on a case-by-case basis, within United Nations peacekeeping mandates, of clear terms for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants, including the safe and timely disposal of arms and ammunition;

"(b) The establishment by Governments contributing to peacekeeping operations of databases of experts on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants. In this context, training in disarmament and demobilization could be a useful component of national programmes for the preparation of peacekeeping troops;

"(c) The prevention and reduction of the excessive and destabilizing flow, accumulation and illegitimate use of small arms and light weapons. In this context, the relevant Security Council resolutions and existing United Nations arms embargoes should be strictly implemented.

"The Security Council is of the view that techniques for executing and coordinating programmes related to the process of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants and the problems associated with it should be given in-depth consideration. It takes note with appreciation of the efforts made by the Secretary-General, United Nations bodies, Member States and international and regional organizations aimed at developing general principles and practical guidelines for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants in a peacekeeping environment.

"The Security Council underlines the need to address this issue on a regular basis, and in this regard, requests the Secretary-General to submit to the Council, within a period of six months, a report containing his analysis, observations and recommendations, in particular those relating to principles and guidelines as well as practices, experiences and lessons learned to facilitate its further consideration of the matter. The report should pay special attention to the problems of disarmament and demobilization of child soldiers and their reintegration into society."

"The Security Council will remain seized of the matter."

This statement will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/1999/21.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.